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# EUROPEAN BALLADRY

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Poesie ist tiefes Schmerzen,  
Und es kommt das echte Lied  
Einzig aus dem Menschenherzen,  
Das ein tiefes Leid durchglüht.  
Doch die höchsten Poesieen  
Schweigen, wie der höchste Schmerz;  
Nur wie Geisterschatten ziehen  
Stumm sie durchs gebrochne Herz.

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Most of all the Spanish ballad  
Haunts me oft, and tarries long,  
Of the noble Count Arnaldos  
And the sailor's mystic song.  
Like the long waves on a sea-beach,  
Where the sand as silver shines,  
With a soft, monotonous cadence,  
Flow its unrhymed lyric lines;  
Till my soul is full of longing  
For the secret of the sea,  
And the heart of the great ocean  
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

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## PREFACE

A CRITIC has been known to complain that he could not imagine for what sort of reader a given book was devised. Lest this difficulty should again arise, it may be well to say that this book counts on one reader: its author. It is an attempt to set down answers to a number of small questions which have been nagging at the base of his brain for several years: what are ballads? who made them, and for whom? what purpose do they serve? why do they die? and so on. Once the answers are fair and feateously written down, no one will have motives more keen than those of the author to see whether they stand their ground when the enthusiasm of invention has died; no one—because past experience promises that these questions, insufficiently answered, will raise their heads and nag, nag again.

The author would have been contented to accept any complete solution. At first indeed, it seemed sufficient to repeat the words of the masters whenever the course of professional duty brought up the topic of ballad poetry. (The field happened to be Spanish ballads, where the masters are insuperable.) Curiosity leading the writer to follow up some references to the ballads of his own tongue, he realized that there were other masters holding very different language. There are, perhaps, no two ideas in common between Sr. Menéndez Pidal and Andrew Lang on this subject. So new questions raised their heads: are all ballads really the same thing? are the different explanations compatible within some larger answer? The author nibbled at the cheese in some articles on points of detail, and then it seemed possible to cut a way through to a solution (since a conviction of ballad oneness was steadily gaining strength) by comparing the evidence of some of the greatest national balladries on a few fundamental problems: this was the purpose of an article in *Medium Aevum*, vol. i, a comparative study of Spanish, Danish, and Yugoslav balladries. What effect that article had on its readers, if any, is concealed from the present writer: on himself it had the disconcerting effect of revealing the insufficiency of his data. To answer the very simplest inquiries about the nature of ballads, it seemed necessary to traverse all the ground of dispute. All the ballads of all the nations or communities in Europe have some evidence to contribute. This was the

point at which a prudent man, mindful that only specialists can be truly scholarly, would have desisted from the enterprise. It would have stopped, but for the nagging of the little questions themselves, which would not be at peace without an answer.

At this point the author-*qua*-reader, who is a personage at least as distinct as Launcelot Gobbo's conscience, and so able to enter into a dialogue with the writer, came in with his fallacious assurances.

'The task is not herculean. The ballad is, so far as you are concerned, a definitely European and medieval phenomenon; and it is possible to acquire a reading knowledge of the languages, especially as ballad vocabulary and style are intrinsically simple. You do not need to read all ballads. So long as you handle really representative collections, it will be safe to let hundreds stand for thousands. Keep your questions perfectly simple; look for the answers with your own eyes, not forgetting to consult all available authorities. You should not be seriously in error, if you describe what you have actually seen for yourself; and the truth, if not precisely what you make it, must be of that kind.'

It is to be feared that the author-*qua*-reader was optimistically misinformed about the difficulty of the undertaking. He did not know how many languages there are in Europe, and that the least accessible are often the most abundant in ballads. It did not occur to him that the songs, in addition to being old in speech, were often maddeningly dialectal, so that the dictionaries were always liable to fail his needs. It was not possible to envisage such a case as the Erlangen manuscript of Yugoslav songs which, in addition to being Hercegovinian (for whatever dialectal difficulties that might imply), have been copied out by a German with a copious supply of German mispronunciations; nor could one imagine how hard it is to read Greek ballads, in the vulgar language, by the aid of dictionaries all anxious to demonstrate the likeness of modern to ancient Greek. Let it be admitted that the rule of trusting only one's own eyes has been broken in the case of Finnish and Esthonian ballads, lest this inquiry should be spun out to infinity. For Hungarian poetry it has been necessary to rely too heavily on report, since the material that came to hand was generally not of the right type. Into Gaelic balladry, if the term be rightly applied, the writer has gone only far enough to be aware how slippery that ground may be. There are still gaps, but nothing, I hope, which

may invalidate the inquiry. The authority of half a dozen fundamental stores of ballad poetry should be enough to guarantee the soundness of the general plan.

Temptation was offered to carry the inquiry outside Europe. Perhaps some one else may do so; but for the present it seemed that Europe is a sufficiently homogeneous mass, and that the movement of ballads within Europe could be related to place and time, so that the whole study could have the solidity of history. European ballads are such and such; they resemble each other broadly so; they rise at approximately similar times, under approximately similar circumstances; there has been a traffic in certain motifs, so marked that one can establish the trade routes; the motifs are often associated with certain facts which give us a chronology of sorts. Poems rather like ballads have been composed and sung outside the Ural frontier: the Confucian odes, perhaps old Arabic raiding poems, Armenian and Caucasian folk-verse, and the ballads of Rajputana, of which my friend Dr. Kalidas Nag has made me aware. All these things might have come into the picture had I been concerned to discuss balladry in the abstract; but my problem was more concrete and historical, and in any case there was the necessity of bringing the work to some end, especially when it was composed on the lip of the erupting volcano of Europe.

So this book is an attempt to write down answers to questions which have perplexed its author; but he does not suppose himself so singular that no one should be found to share his wish for greater assurance. Indeed, he has had evidence to the contrary. In the course of pondering and puzzling, portions of this book have bubbled over in the presence of friends of quite a number of different nationalities, and they have seldom been treated with indifference. Members of small nations with rich balladries have expressed delight at the recognition of their genuine worth; others have been attracted by the width of the theme, or have had an interest in some special aspect. A critic, who believes ballads on the whole to be very small beer, exempts *Sir Patrick Spens*; and one does not have to ask many questions before finding that almost every sensitive person fondles in his heart some favourite ballad: *Tam Lin*, *La Pernelle*, *Count Arnaldos*, *The Maiden of Kosovo*, *Unter der Linde*, *Holger Danske*, *Constantine and Areté*, *Dobrynja's Return*, or *Sadko's Voyage*. There are those who like

the music or the dancing, or the racy language of peasants, or the memories of times gone by, or stark realism or wild magic; but there is something in ballads which stirs every one. Nearly all I have talked to have found some one of the plain little questions really interesting, and have raised the writer's hopes by encouragement. But most of all, I owe thanks to the Oxford Medieval Society who received the pith and gist of this argument with kindly encouragement at a meeting in October 1937.

Mr. John Goss, in his pleasant *Ballads of Britain*, has complained of 'the professors and minor poets who have made this subject their own'. Though a member of one of these depressed classes, and not having risen so high as the second, the author hopes to have added a little to the pleasure found in reading or hearing ballads by mentioning their wider associations. *Lady Isabel and the elfin Knight* is fine in itself, but it calls up such rich associations when one thinks of *Rico Franco* and *Frère Renaud* and *Ulinger* and the original Dutch *Halewijn*, all so strangely begotten, as it would seem, by the old story of Judith and Holofernes. One may be impatient with the *Suffolk Miracle*, and wonder that so strong a plot could be so tamely told; it is surely a gain for us to read it in the Greek *Constantine and Areté* in the fullness of its supernatural horror. There may be some who find these associations no addition to their enjoyment. An English critic has written that, to describe ballads, the English ones will suffice; a Spanish one tells us that no nation has anything comparable to the 'Romancero'; and a German writer claims for the 'Volklied' that they are entirely German. For those who must have their pleasures in secret I can do nothing. For my part I am fascinated by the spectacle of all Europe creating song and enjoyment, without ambition or rivalry, and readily imparting the best creations; and it is with amazed respect that one hears the heroic singing of peoples so often shattered, destitute, and desperate. Ballad comparisons give ground not merely for pleasure of a gayer or graver cast; they become important when we notice how, in land after land, ballads have educated national consciousness and literary taste. There are countries whose very existence depends on ballad traditions, and many a great master in many a land—Cervantes, Shakespeare, Goethe, Oehlenschläger, Coleridge, Heine, Rimski-Korsakov, and others—is what he is partly because of ballads. Were the racial and literary importance of

ballads throughout all Europe generally realized, Englishmen would surely take more than a fleeting and occasional interest in their own very rich heritage.

In writing this book I have contracted many and deep debts and had much encouragement from friends. Doubtless, from one point of view I ought to have contracted still deeper obligations, by handing over the sections of the work to experts. Almost everywhere in this wide European field, my position cannot but be that of an amateur, running the risk of heavy censure from the experts. But I saw no way of determining the proportions of the study save by passing all through one mind; and, apart from the difficulty of finding authorities on many of the remoter fields among English scholars, it seemed to be of the essence of the inquiry that the questions should be kept simple and always asked in the same sense. How difficult that is, only one who has tried it can know; but any alert reader is aware that symposia seldom keep to one path and one manner. In any of its separate chapters this study does not claim to compete with expert authority; but it is hoped that the specialists will be guided when they step off their own ground, and that they may rephrase some of their problems (and perchance conclusions) in the light of a more general experience. The labours of the great collectors and critics are the first grounds for my gratitude. Sr. Ramón Menéndez Pidal's books and articles—I think I have read nearly all of them—have been a model and stimulus to me as to all other hispanists; our indebtedness is not less deep if we have sometimes been tempted to cut our teeth by disputing one or other of his conclusions. I owe a great deal to my fellow members of the Medieval Society, and to colleagues at the Taylor Institution: Professors H. G. Fiedler, G. Rudler, A. Ewert, J. Boyd, C. Foligno, S. Konovalov (on many occasions), Dr. J. Bostock, Miss Olga Bickley, and to Professor R. M. Dawkins and Mr. N. Coghill, my companions at Exeter College. Professor Norman, of London, has given me some useful pointers, and I am very much in the debt of Mrs. Chadwick, not only for her share in the monumental *Growth of Literature*, with its admirable chapters on Russian and Yugoslav poetry, but also on more private occasions. Sir William Craigie has allowed me to consult his Icelandic and Rumanian books. Dr. L. F. Powell, of the Taylorian Library, has indefatigably warned me of books I ought to know. I am grateful to comrades of the P.E.N. Club



also, and notably to Professor Semper for advice as to Esthonian songs, Mr. J. Karklins for the gift of a splendid collection of Latvian 'dainas', and Professor Vladeta Popović for much encouragement and the gift of his copy of the Erlangen poems, without which my outlook on his country's poetry would have been sectional. Professor Iorga Iordan, of Iași, kindly gave some suggestions about Rumanian. Professor Myles Dillon advised me to read certain things on Irish traditional songs, though I have not ventured to incorporate Gaelic evidence into this work. I am grateful also to Dr. Kalidas Nag, of Calcutta, for suggestions concerning Indian ballads, which I have not followed up. 'Forse altri canterà con miglior plettro.' In naming these names, and that of my dear friend and constant encouragement Professor Morley, I desire to exonerate them one and all from any responsibility for the errors I may have committed. That responsibility must be mine.

W. J. E.

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# BOOK I

## BALLADS IN GENERAL

### I

#### PEOPLE AND POETS

IN a vivid passage the Russian collector Rybnikov has spoken of the moment when he first encountered a community in which ballad-poetry was still alive. He had for a long time sought this meeting, but had been foiled by the shyness of the singers, since ballad people are slow to expose their intimate treasures to the ears of strangers. At last his wanderings took the collector to a hut by the shores of Lake Onega. There were peasants in the hut, and conversation and fatigue made Rybnikov drowsy, so that he began to doze by the fire.

Being warmed by the fire, I gradually fell asleep. I was awakened by strange sounds. Up to now I had heard many songs and religious poems, but such singing as this I had not heard. Vivacious, fantastic and gay, now it grew quicker, now it slowed down, and recalled by its tune something very long ago, forgotten by our generation. For a long time I was unwilling to awaken, and listened to every word of the song—so happy was I to remain totally overpowered by this new sensation.<sup>1</sup>

These were the first sounds of the popular ballads which grew, under his hand, into one of the richest of the Russian collections. The people who cherish and enjoy the 'byliny' have since been more fully described.<sup>2</sup> They are free peasants living in the rude and invigorating tracts of Russia lying to the north of the great forest belt. The landscape is rough, mighty, stately, and of fascinating primitiveness. The distances between villages often amount to hundreds of versts, and the intervening spaces are diversified by swamps, lakes, rivers, and rocks. In autumn and spring the peasants are often separated from each other for weeks. A rigorous climate compels men to work strenuously in the few months at their disposal; fishing and hunting cease when the long, white winter drives them to seek the warmth of their wooden houses.

<sup>1</sup> *Apud* H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, Cambridge, 1936, ii, pp. 239-40.

<sup>2</sup> R. Trautmann, *Die Volksdichtung der Grossrussen*, Heidelberg, 1935, i, pp. 17 ff.

The inhabitants have a natural sense of form and a ready invention, and they are thrown on their own resources for entertainment. Story-telling and singing are the delight of the peasants, few of whom (none of the good singers) know how to read or write. Schools are few; the nearest rail-head is sometimes hundreds of miles distant; and a vast forest zone sunders these regions from the rest of Russia. This belt, and the rigours of their life, have saved them from the serfdom which has cursed the easier lands to the south, preserving their independence and initiative. The singers are men of the same class as the listeners, but have acquired fame over wide areas for their gifts of memory or voice. Frequently they have been specialized to their profession by some natural calamity, such as blindness, which has lessened their usefulness in their proper trades.

Across the width of Europe and the Atlantic from these Russians it is possible to encounter another ballad folk, of our own blood.<sup>1</sup> The mountains of Virginia and North Carolina lie, indeed, at no great distance from flourishing centres of American civilization, but are scarcely less isolated than the peasants we have described. No commercial prospects exist to entice traffic by rail and road. The roads are few, and rough; when they peter out at some mission school, the traveller must take to horse. A primitive cultivation and soil erosion make the winning of livelihood a hard task; after a severe season, famine cannot be staved off. The log-cabins lie at distances apart, but relative prosperity confers on certain persons the English title of 'squire'. There are few social services; none maintained by the districts themselves. In such a community old customs survive, together with traditional turns of speech and the words and airs of old ballads. The ballads are sung unaccompanied, or to a 'dulcimer', and there are persons in the community who have a superior repute for their repertoire. Transmission is from mouth to mouth. Sometimes the words are jotted down as an aid to memory, and note-books containing such jottings are 'ballet' books. To 'have the ballet' of a ballad is to have a written text, but these texts are not for circulation, still less for printing. The ballads, or 'love songs' as they are called, are prized but not praised. Any new jingle from the towns causes more admiration for a while, and a certain disrepute attaches itself to 'love songs' in

<sup>1</sup> Described by Dorothy Scarborough, *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains*, New York, 1937. An older account is that given in C. J. Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Oxford, 1933. There are several others.

the face of hymns and moral poems. Patience is needed to win the confidence of those who know ballads, to overcome their coyness. Once they have been persuaded to sing, they bring forth things old and new. Not only are many of Child's ballads still alive in the American mountains; but the use of old scales proves that the tunes are equally ancient. The historical sense is vague, though there are some pieces recognized as 'way back yonder songs'. By way of compensation, the sense of immediacy is such that traditional ballads are given a new setting as events within living memory. In Scotland the details of *The Douglas Tragedy* have been fitted to the Yarrow at Douglas Craig; but Miss Scarborough encountered in Virginia a ninety-year-old gentleman who claimed to have been a witness. '*The Seven Sleepers* (he told her) was a true song. It happened way back yonder in Mutton Hollow. I was there myself. Somebody got killed over the girl. I was there soon after it happened. Another man was after the girl and one man shot him.' Frequently the reciter's memory fails, and mention is made of some relative who had known the song much better. At other times, one will exclaim, 'Oh, if only I were driving the cows home I could sing it at once!' so closely are the words of the song associated with some feature of the singer's usual vocation.

Crete and Asia Minor have proved fruitful sources of Greek ballads, thanks to their remoteness; in Spain the Asturian valleys have given asylum to archaic versions. The remoteness of the four East Baltic states is linguistic rather than geographical. Shut in to the use of their own resources, they have each developed copious and versatile balladries. In the larger states of western Europe social groups may approximate to the conditions of a ballad people, since their interests may be centred on themselves as a well-defined community. Sir William Craigie has told me that at St. Andrew's University in his day it was customary for students to gather outside the mathematical class-room before a lecture, to sing for half an hour. Among the songs one might encounter genuine, if late plebeian, ballads, such as *Clementine* or *Riding down from Bangor*. The gathering of these and other songs into *Students' Song Books* seems to have had the untoward effect of converting students' songs into concert pieces, having burst open the oral tradition which was their firmest guarantee. In the United States new ballads have arisen out of the conditions of cowboy life and among the negroes. The great conscript armies of Europe create self-

centred communities, depending for entertainment on their voices and ears. The German armies have been particularly rich in lyrics and ballads. In those of Austria the same events or recurrent situations are recorded in German, Czech, Hungarian, Rumanian, and Croat songs; and there is a soldiers' section in the ballad collections of Poland, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, due to service in the Russian army. The ballads express the peasant's dislike of conscription and the exile it causes, the march to a frontier, some desperate defence, the soldier's dying testament associated now with one battle, now the other, the sad or joyful return home. These professional songs are the direct descendants of those sung by reiters and landsknechts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and by Swiss pikemen in the fourteenth and fifteenth.

The Faeroe Islands may be classed as a remote community, but their flourishing cult of the ballad in our day has this additional feature: it is common to the entire population.<sup>1</sup> New songs are required for the festival of the patron saint and other important dates, and they are multiplied by the convention that the same words should not be used twice in a year. The demand for new matter is satisfied by importing ballads from Denmark and Norway, either in the original or in translation, and by excavating new ballads from Icelandic sagas. As late as the year 1830 a bonder named Djurhuus composed his *Long Serpent* (*Ormurin langi*) from materials in the *Saga of St. Olaf*, and it was not committed to print until 1884. Curiously enough, the equally remote and self-sufficing community of the Icelanders has shown indifference to the ballads, being wholly devoted to the cult of an elaborate rhetorical form: the 'rímur'.<sup>2</sup> The poetry of the Gael has also developed under a strict discipline in bardic schools. These were, says one authority,<sup>3</sup>

the university system of the nation—granting degrees, or what corresponded to such, and bestowing privileges on both professors and students simply because they were professors and students.

He goes on to remark that 'one searches Europe in vain for the

<sup>1</sup> See the classical description in V. U. Hammershaimb, *Færøsk Anthologi*, Copenhagen, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> See Sir William Craigie's Tylorian lecture, *The Art of Poetry in Iceland*, Oxford, 1937, and *Skotlands Rímur*, Oxford, 1908.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland*, Dublin, 1925, p. 63.

equivalent of our bardic school system'. It lasted in Ireland until the disasters of the seventeenth century, and was even then prolonged by the Courts of Poetry which met in taverns surreptitiously to maintain the prestige of poetic art. In Scotland there were bardic schools in the eighteenth century. This highly academic atmosphere did not prevent poems entering into oral tradition, so as to be recovered in our days on the lips of 'illiterate' peasants in Kerry and Galway. It is not impossible for a traditional culture to prefer elaborate to naïve art; but such instances lie away from the beaten track of this book.

Of another ballad people we have had detailed descriptions in recent years: the Montenegrin Serbs, who treasure and still compose ballads.<sup>1</sup> The minor particulars are not of general application, and may be omitted here, as also the possible relation between this society and that which gave rise to the primitive (and largely hypothetical) epics of Germany. In the high places of Montenegro and the Dinaric Alps a heroic form of poetry and society has persisted in vigour to our day. The social unit is small; it is the tribe or family state. Wealth, commerce, and elaborate hierarchies require an ampler space for their growth, and in fact have come to possess the Serbian river valleys. But in the mountains, the criterion of aristocracy is personal prowess; allegiance is given to a leader who joins birth to valour, and it is perturbed by personal feuds. Raids on traditional enemies, vendettas, marriage under the figure of bride-stealing, and calamitous battles make up the stuff, not only of entertainment, but of instruction. Where all are poor, the poverty of the poet is not exceptional; his status is acknowledged, and his improvisations are the acknowledged standards of achievement in the group. Like a bard or a skald he has his allotted place beside the tribal leader, and is a master of a definite technique, though it is not erudite like theirs. On the plains the heroic ballad is no longer at home, and traditional songs are cultivated chiefly by the women in their dances; by women, among whom traditions linger longer than among men.

The authority of the Montenegrin ballads encourages us to take at their face value those social descriptions implied for countries

<sup>1</sup> M. Braun, 'Zur Frage des Heldenliedes bei den Serbokroaten', M. Braun und Th. Frings, 'Heldenlied', both in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, lix, 1935; M. Murko, *La Poésie épique en Yougoslavie au début du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1929; W. Wünsch, *Heldensänger in Südosteuropa*, Leipzig, 1937.

where ballads are moribund or dead. The Scottish borderers, for instance, lived lives no less land-bound and precarious than the inhabitants of the Blue Mountains of Virginia; but their society was more organized and more equal to their age. In our border ballads the people is no proletariat. The proletariat is not mentioned; the people consists of those bold-handed men who were grouped round leaders like Johnny Armstrong and Willie Scott, an aristocracy of their own sort of world. The Spanish frontier ballads, also, imply the people of southern fortresses, led by such persons as Bishop Gonzalo of Jaén, Fajardo of Murcia, Don Alonso de Aguilar, the soldier Sayavedra, &c. It is evident that the American ballads have suffered 'deminutio capitis'. Danish ballads, now crooned above cradles or danced by peasants in barns, were formerly the delight of the squire's garth. The local grandee would lead the dance, and the king might be an onlooker, if he thought the queen safe in the palace. It is the society of the ideal republic: the number of persons within range of a leader's voice. It is true that ballads mention more august ranks, and have even a fondness for kings and emperors. But they describe them as magnified squires, all their acts and feelings being on a personal scale. So we have those intimate, charming, and unreal scenes: Queen Bengerd, waking up in the morning, and demanding her morning gift, which is a general persecution of the Danish bonders; Charlemagne, told of his son's misdeeds, and agreeing to have him punished at once; Niels Ebbesøn protecting the Danish frontier for purely private reasons; the king talking to Robin Hood as easily as Robin to Friar Tuck. In the Spanish ballads of Montesinos we are told that the hero rode to Paris from the Pyrenees (whence the city was visible!) to avenge his father's wrongs. He rode into the royal courtyard and strode into the chamber. A game of chess was in progress between the king and the traitor Tomillas. Montesinos lounged by, as an onlooker. He saw Tomillas was cheating, snatched up the board and beat out his brains. The king was annoyed, but a few words of explanation put things right. In the French epos of *Aïol*, on which these ballads depend, it is not considered possible for unknown young men to gate-crash on kings in this way. *Aïol* has to gain the king's favour by feudal service and prowess, and he has to collect a party which will enable him to make headway against Macaire and all his numerous and powerful lineage. *Aïol*, in fact, has national pro-



portions and is set in complicated feudal conditions; the *Montesinos* ballads imply a more informal and restricted community.

A combination of these snapshots will provide a recognizable portrait of the ballad people. Minor differences have already been apparent, but there are a few common features which are constant. The community supposed by ballad poetry is small, stable, and self-sufficient. In the east it is composed of the Slavic 'knjaz' and his 'družina' or body-guard, and the latter came to be fixed at a conventional total of thirty in Serbian tradition. To build the Bridge at Arta, according to a Greek ballad, there gathered

Five and forty master-wrights, apprentices full sixty.

A Spanish ballad begins

See from Jaén sally forth a good four hundred gentlemen.

They are attached to particular places: Branhholm, the Sherwood Forest, Antequera, Kiev, Senj, &c. Despite all the activity displayed in the ballads, they relate no great movements of peoples; nothing like the Germanic Migrations, the settlement of Iceland, or the Crusades. The numbers involved in some of these movements may not have been greater than those of ballad poetry, but the scale of their actions corresponds to epos or saga, not to ballads. Nationality is too big a concept for people so tribally organized. One encounters instead simple antitheses which explain the recurrence of the same sort of action in ballad after ballad. There are the Scots and English of our Borders, naturally at feud; Moors and Christians; Serbs and Turks; Holy Russian 'bogatyrs' and pagans, indifferently drawn from Lithuania or Tatar. Doubtless these conflicts have amounted in fact to formative influences in national history, but the ballad poets see them only episodically, as they concern individuals. The great 'geste' is broken into fragments. The career of Ruy Díaz de Bivar gives 205 different narratives; the disaster to the Serbs at Kosovo is recounted as it affected Miloš Obilić, Prince Lazar, the nine Jugovići and their mother, a nameless maiden, but there is no attempt at a conspectus on a grand scale, such as occurs in the heroic epics. These small communities are self-centred and self-sufficient, attached to their own soil by instinctive patriotism, and led by leaders who command their personal devotion. They have a lively intelligence, as their metaphors show. In the best periods there is restraint and decency in the ballads, however tragic or amusing the pieces may be.

Criminal themes and vulgar jesting are signs that a given ballad tradition is on the wane, through the withdrawal of the best elements of society. Singers and hearers are normally analphabetic. 'Illiterate' is no term to apply to the creators of so much exquisite literature; but theirs is a literature for the ear, not for the eye. The spread of the habit of reading—the habit, rather than the mere ability—is everywhere a principal cause of ballad decline. Gradually more and more members of the community seek their pleasure away from the ballads, which fall to the exclusive possession of the vulgar. In the best periods the ballad people is homogeneous.

The relationships maintained within such societies are entirely personal. 'A man's a man for a' that' in ballad poetry, and he is found to act upon the simplest and most universal motives. The sphere of his activities is uniform, and even monotonous. Feuds arise out of quarrels among tipplers, brides are stolen with the same precautions, duels are between puny heroes and gigantic villains, there are heroic massacres of a common pattern, love comes at first sight and is irresistible, and a simple ethical code distinguishes right and wrong without the sanction of religion. These repetitions are not due, one feels, to poverty of imagination, but to a feeling that everything has its due ritual and form. An event, whatever its actual circumstances, readily pours itself into one of the established moulds, using the appropriate form of words. Professor Popović has told me that ballads on the Great War already circulate in the hills of Montenegro. The details are those of ballad tradition: Tsar William writes a letter to Tsar Peter demanding submission or tribute. Tsar Peter receives the letter, says not a word, springs to his nimble feet, and mounts his horse, taking lance and pistols. The rivals meet and exchange their blows, and the Serb is inevitably the victor. A pattern of this kind seems to run through these efforts to express poetically a recent event which is known to have taken quite another form. Vuk Stepan Karadžić has told us how one of his informants was suddenly moved to compose a poem on the scuffle for which he had to flee from his home. In place of a mean affray with a Turkish gendarme, the rhapsode produced a full-dress duel with a gigantic pagan adversary, first with the lance, and then with pistols. Each thing has its proper rhythm.

This rhythm and these conditions of society may be truly described as medieval. Ballads do not begin anywhere in Europe until the mass migrations have subsided and left people engaged

by small groups in occupying the soil. Actual dates, as we shall see later, can be assigned for the beginning of some of the cardinal collections. Medieval England, writes Mr. H. S. Bennett,<sup>1</sup>

was almost exclusively rural England, and rural England congregated in small groups of people, here fifty, here a hundred, and (much less often) here several hundreds, living in rude houses which clustered together in some places, while in others they straggled endlessly down the village street. Agriculture and its allied occupations engaged the energies of everyone as they strove to win a living from the soil. These small groups, on closer examination, are often found to be sharing certain rights and privileges and to be discharging certain duties, under the protection and control of a lord. There were many thousands of these little groups throughout England, and they formed the manorial society which existed for some hundreds of years after the Conquest.

The borders of the Danish songs were similarly grouped round the garth of a lord. The borderers, in Scotland or Spain, and the meinees of Serbian princelings were like this, save that the occupation of those worthy to be mentioned in poetry was war, not agriculture. Such conditions did not commence everywhere in the same age, and the dates of ballad beginnings vary correspondingly. One has to allow also for the fact that the ballad is an art form, which does not arise spontaneously, but more often has some literary antecedents.

The end of medieval society comes with the practice of reading. This was due in the West to humanism and the art of printing. Books, suddenly much more plentiful and cheap, drew to themselves the middle and upper classes, abandoning the ballads to the vulgar. Even then, however, ballad communities might survive, though on a humbler level, thanks to difficulty of communication, local backwardness, or some cause like professional segregation. The conscripts of the great European armies, as we have seen, prolong in some measure the medieval self-sufficient, homogeneous, alphabetic ballad societies. In the Balkans and Russia the end of medieval conditions has come much later. The lettered public is relatively small. One notices chiefly the drying up of patronage in the wealthier centres, where probably the ballads were first developed. The songs are scattered to the circumference of culture. Those of Kiev, for instance, having been transformed by

<sup>1</sup> *Life on the English Manor: a study of peasant life, 1150-1400*, Cambridge, 1937, p. 41.

Muscovy, are now to be encountered in the far north, sheltered by the deep forest belt. In such places composition still goes on. Professor Dawkins has shown me a curious instance in the Cretan ballad of *Daskaloanni*, printed roughly in a small popular pamphlet. The poem is of more than a thousand lines, and begins with an elaborate invocation:

Dear God, now grant enlightenment, a heart like to a cauldron,  
to me as I commemorate the schoolmaster Johannes.

Dear God, wit and ability grant as I make beginning  
in ballad-wise to sing a song of that renowned teacher.

Dear God, now grant me memory, within my head put wisdom,  
here to compose and utter forth the sad affair at Sphakia.

So he continues, with an all too common tale of Turkish oppression and wild revenge. The affair occurred in 1770. In 1786 Anagnostis, son of the priest Joseph Skordylis, took it down from the dictation of the illiterate poet, writing a little each day; he wrote at Papura, beyond the Giverti, where he was a dealer in milk and cheese.

And it was I that held the pen, 'twas I that held the paper,  
but he dictated me the tale, and word by word I wrote it,  
for he dictated me the tale of the schoolmaster Johannes,  
and ever tears streamed from his eyes, as he the deed remembered;  
till all his speech was broken off, his narrative was ended,  
and all his inmost heart was poured in black and bitter groaning.

The poet, so deeply afflicted but (it must be confessed) not skilful in conveying his grief, was the 'barba' Patzelios. Another poet in the same pamphlet was George Pateros.<sup>1</sup>

Such poets were not professionals with a high standard of training. Any one could compose a ballad who knew how to express events in the ballad manner. King James the First is among the reputed authors, Fray Ambrosio Montesinos, a future bishop, and Gil Vicente, a goldsmith of Lisbon. Many another name is known, chiefly hacks. The scholars of the bardic schools who forged and preserved the Ossianic poems and underwent a kind of university training cannot be deemed to have written 'ballads' within the same sense of the term, nor can Icelandic 'rímur' or poems in the old Norse *Edda* be fairly called ballads. Such work is too specialized. The vocation for ballad poetry is more intuitive and casual. To lead a Bulgarian round-dance the precentor must be distinguished

<sup>1</sup> *Kreti kai Rimai*, Athens, 'Estia, 1888, edited by Emm. Bardidé, Cretan.

for voice and memory; knowledge of good songs and a clear enunciation are the chief qualifications, and these confer local fame on a fortunate possessor. Out of remembered phrases it is easily possible to frame a new ballad. In the Faeroe Islands, similarly, there were bonders who took special interest in conserving and creating ballads; their names are given by Hammershaimb. In many cases, specialization has been due to a physical misfortune; above all, blindness. The Spanish word 'ciego' (blind man) readily connotes 'street-singer', and these unfortunates have their own poets, to supply new ballads about bull-fights and sudden deaths. 'Teiresias and blind Mæonides' have many descendants to this day. Lameness is implied by the Russian term 'kalêka', which is, apparently, the modern derivative of 'kalika', 'pilgrim', which implies another kind of specialization. One may go on reciting such semi-professional titles: Sidney's 'blind crowder', 'minstrel', 'jongleur', 'juglar', 'histrion', and 'skomoroh'. They show that the making of the people's ballads was in competent hands, though not confined to a closed class. The Montenegrin 'guslari', with his recognized position in the small patriarchal society, enjoys a marked repute. In somewhat more glowing and imaginative terms, the Russian minstrels have spoken of the minstrelsy of the hero Dobrynja at the court of the Golden Prince Vladimir of Kiev:

The little minstrel paid no heed to their words,  
the little minstrel took no notice of their words,  
then burst into speech the little minstrel:  
'Ah thou Vladimir, royal Sun of Kiev!  
where stands our place, reserved for the minstrel?'  
Then answered Vladimir, royal Prince of Kiev:  
'Your place, reserved for minstrelsy,  
is at the stove there, behind the stove.'  
The little minstrel was not squeamish about that place,  
but jumped upon the glazed oven.  
Then he played on his furious gusli  
even on that glazed oven;  
Dobrynja played in the manner of Kiev,  
and played in addition in the manner of Tsargrad,  
concerning the old and the young  
he played, naming their names.  
All those at the tables fell a-wondering,  
all to his playing gave closest hearing,  
all those at the tables burst out saying:

'But here is no bold minstrel,  
 it is a stout, worthy young warrior,  
 a mighty bogatyr of Holy Russia.'  
 Then spake royal Vladimir of Kiev:  
 'Ah thou bold minstrel!  
 Get you down from the oven, behind the oven,  
 we give thee three places, the three choice ones:  
 one place here beside me,  
 another place facing me,  
 a third place where thou wilt.'<sup>1</sup>

No doubt Dobrynja was more fortunate than most working minstrels, who probably did not enjoy the advantages of silken strings and golden chords, but his advancement in the profession shows that the minstrel's place at the feast was known.

Poets and poetry of this sort might justly be called 'popular'. The word does not involve the slur of vulgarity; plebeian ballads belong to the decline of the art, but in the best epoch the whole people sings. Nor need the word imply adherence to the mystical doctrine of the people's authorship, about which much ink has been shed.<sup>2</sup> The audience, drawn without abstentions from the whole community, conditions the minstrel's performance as reciter and creator. The matter belongs to them all, and any one who knows a better version may produce it. After a song has been sung, the audience falls into a discussion, and mention may be made of variants.<sup>3</sup> There is no professional wall separating the performer from his hearers; he is no more than 'primus inter pares'. If he composes a new song, he must meet the people's expectations. The course of the tale must have the prescribed order and formulas. The art is greater than the artist, who must not show his hand if he is to be believed. Karadžić says somewhere that Yugoslav minstrels claim to hand on from tradition even songs they have composed themselves about the events of yesterday; if the German and

<sup>1</sup> Gil'ferding, *Onežskija Byliny*, St. Petersburg, 1873, pp. 43-4; cf. N. K. Chadwick, *Russian Heroic Poetry*, Cambridge, 1932, pp. 87-8.

<sup>2</sup> Most recently between Mr. John Goss and Sir J. C. Squire in the former's *Ballads of Britain*, London, 1937. Mr. Goss puts his case in such general terms that there is room for both disputants to be right. The best treatment of this subject is R. Menéndez Pidal's lecture, *Poesía popular y poesía tradicional*, Oxford, 1922, to which I shall recur in the next chapter.

<sup>3</sup> 'She was firm in her notion as to the correct way of rendering songs, and when mention was made of a version differing from hers, she would say hotly, "That ain't right. This is the way it goes."' (Dorothy Scarborough, *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains*, New York, 1937, p. 61.)

French songs of the trades are wont to declare the poet's profession and claim that the song is new, that also is a matter of formula, since the claim to be new adheres still when the ballad has become very old.

In this way ballads come to be the completest definition of the community which enjoys them. One must allow that not all things are considered suitable for verse; but that which finds expression, finds it in the commonest manner. If we wish to know what sort of mind is the Spanish one, it is of less advantage to consult *Don Quijote*, which is a work of exceptional genius, or the 'comedias', which were Castilian and of a certain epoch, than the 'romancero'. The 'romances' are at home not only in Castile, whence they sprung up, but wherever Castilian is spoken: in Mexico or Chile, or among the exiled Jews in Oran and the Balkans. They have spread into all the dialects, and into the languages akin to Castilian. So the same ballads and ballad-types are encountered in Portugal and her islands, and in Brazil. In Catalonia ballads are Spanish, save for an older French stratum. But when these songs travel farther, it is by way of translation, and they appear as exotics. Every Spaniard has seen his image in Don Quixote or Don Juan, the one with his unbridled passion for justice, the other with his unbridled will, both dynamic figures. The Cid of the 'romances' is a froward youth and an upright old man, typically Spanish in either way, without the need to discount any of his qualities; the Cid is neither mad, like Don Quixote, nor a hedonist, like Don Juan, nor are Spaniards like that in general. Genius may offer pictures which are more subtly true, more various or more brilliant; but nothing more broadly acceptable than the portraits of ballad poetry. The features are generalized and motives are broadly human; the situations are those which occur at all times. The heroic exaltation of Roland when he refuses to blow his horn, or the cold fury of Hagen in the pit of serpents, are moments of tension which cannot be for ever maintained; Milton's puritanism or Tasso's synthesis of Christendom are attitudes that have passed. But Robin Hood's good humour and sense of fair play are, one hopes, qualities for ever English; Niels Ebbeson's self-reliance is the manly Dane; Il'ja and Dobrynja are Russians of the Russians, and Marko Kraljević is everything a Serb would like to be. They have their faults, which are also characteristic. Save for their stature, ballad heroes are average leaders of their race.

So it happens that ballads, which (as we have seen) know so little of nationality, have come to create and sustain the sense of nationhood in times of deadly peril. However crushed by the rapacity of pashas, the Bulgar could not lose heart so long as he sang of daring attacks on the treasure trains. One reads, without surprise, that the brothers Miladinov could not gather these ballads without risk to life and limb. Though the Bulgarian and Serbian tongues are almost one, the ballads of the latter perpetuate the racial difference in the term 'black Bulgar'. The Greek klepht led a life of wild exhilaration in summer and bitter privation in winter; it was sure to end on the gallows, probably after torture; yet his 'tragoudia' let him believe that Olympos and Kissabos talked of his exploits, and convinced him that 'freedom is a glorious thing'. Thanks to the ballads, the razzias of the klephts were joined into one common demand for Greek freedom. Still more marked was the influence of his ballads on the Serb. The best of them sang of the defeat of Kosovo, redeemed from shame by patriotic devotion and martyrdom; in Marko Kraljević they had a Serb whom no odds could daunt; and the haiduk poems displayed the same wild valour on a more normal scale and in more recent times. We can well believe that such memories were in their minds as the Serbian army crossed the field of Kosovo in the war of 1912.

As soon as the soldiers felt under their feet the liberated plain, they fell on their knees, whispering prayers and kissing the sacred soil. And when they rose again, they instinctively marched over it softly, on tip-toe, in order not to disturb the sleep of the heroic dead who, more than five hundred years before, had there given their lives for Cross and Liberty.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, the sight of Marko Kraljević astride his Dapple broke a detachment away from the line to storm a hillock with an irresistible rush, before the officers could restore the discipline required by modern war.

These Balkan instances are striking, but are not unparalleled. In the north, Holger Danske became a symbol of Danish freedom through his defence of their land against the German Dietrich, and Danish soldiers chanted his ballad as they manned the Daneverk in 1864. The recovery of the *Kalevala* and *Kalevipoeg*, and of the balladry underlying these poems, has restored the national spirit of Finns and Esthonians.

<sup>1</sup> J. Lavrin in Helen Rootham, *Kossovo: Heroic Songs of the Serbs*, Oxford, 1920, pp. 19-20.



I have the liveliest recollection (wrote Dr. Jakob Hurt) how on a fine summer morning—it was a holiday—I ran to Dr. W. Schultz, then secretary of the Esthonian Learned Academy, in real enthusiasm, and got myself a copy of the eagerly awaited heroic poem. With hasty impatience I cut the pages, and with feverish excitement I ran over the introduction and the individual songs. No other work in my youth so gripped me, so electrified me, as these first cantos of the *Kalevipoeg*. The sweet accent of my mother-tongue, beloved echoes of home, marvellous memories of golden childhood, the original thoughts and figures, the popular form and art of composition—all these worked mightily on me, weaving a magic halo around the newly resurrected national hero. . . . I understood and fully comprehended the enthusiasm of Dr. G. Schultz of St. Petersburg when he said: ‘Just think what an inspiring influence it must be for a people to become aware and conscious of its historical existence and grandeur! They would feel like that beggar who was abruptly told, “You are a king’s son!” Is there any more incontestable evidence of a people’s significance than the possession of its own epos?’<sup>1</sup>

History and interest formerly united Lithuania with Poland; ballads and language now keep them apart. The languages of Lithuania and Latvia are closely akin, but the countries have had different historical experiences; the sweet elegies of Lithuania show a different temper of mind from that which forged the Latvian epigrams.

Ballads have power to declare nationality and separate neighbours, but they have also power to unite those whom history has put asunder. The old common feelings of Scotland, Norway, and Denmark, revealed in the ballads, have been to some extent recovered in modern times by Jamieson’s rendering of the ‘viser’,<sup>2</sup> and Grundtvig’s of the Scottish pieces. The scores of English ballads alive in the American mountains, sung in the manner of English folk-songs and occasionally in modes we have forgotten, are firm testimony to the cousinship of the two nations. The greatest services to English literature by the United States have been F. J. Child’s ordering of the *English and Scottish Ballads*, and the discovery by his pupils how lively these traditions of ours are to-day in America.

<sup>1</sup> J. Hurt, *Vana Kannel (Alte Harfe)*, Tartu, 1886, i, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>2</sup> Selected ‘viser’. A more amply representative collection is R. C. A. Prior’s *Ancient Danish Ballads*, 3 vols., London, 1860.

## II

### WHAT IS A BALLAD?

TO the word 'ballad' it will be necessary to attribute a special meaning for the duration of this book, since none of those commonly accepted precisely cover the subject. The material of ballad concerts—'a light, simple song of any kind: now specially a sentimental or romantic composition, each verse of which is sung to the same melody'—does not concern us here; still less have we to do with 'popular songs, often scurrilous or personal' or with 'posies'. The etymological sense of the word is 'dancing-song', but many such songs are in use which we should not call ballads, and many, perhaps most, ballads were not composed to accompany a dance. There remains a fifth definition in the *Oxford Dictionary*, supported by the excellent instance of *Sir Patrick Spens*: in this acceptation a ballad is 'a simple, spirited poem in short stanzas, narrating some popular story'. The definition stands much nearer to the intention of this book, but it is, on the whole, too narrow. One might cavil at the word 'spirited' since there are too many base and dispirited ballads which we must accept, though without dwelling upon them, but the demand for stanzaic structure is fulfilled only by English ballads and those of the countries within a certain radius of our shores; three out of four principal types of European ballad are not stanzaic at all. One might, of course, use the English word to describe the English thing, which is of sufficient importance in itself, were it not for the fact that no more general term is available. In Spain traditional narrative poems are called 'romances' and these cohere in the 'romancero'. The collective term is of great significance, since it is a witness to the fixity of Spanish technique in this matter, to the mutual relations of the various 'romances', and to their collective weight and influence. It has spread to France, Germany, and Italy, and 'romance' in France and 'romanza' in Italy have been distinguished from 'roman, romanzo', 'romance, novel'. But in our country these words have no circulation beyond the limited company of English hispanists, nor is naturalization feasible, since it would not be possible to keep apart the two acceptations of the word 'romance'. There is no option but to employ the word 'ballad' in the widest sense as meaning any short traditional narrative poem sung,

with or without accompaniment or dance, in assemblies of the people.

Narrative songs of this nature could be heard all over Europe in the later years of the fifteenth century or the first half of the sixteenth, and they are still enjoyed or newly created in central, south-western, and south-eastern Europe and in parts of America where English, Scandinavian, and Spanish ballads still live. The area covered by balladry is vast and the period since they first appeared in the twelfth century is long, yet their unity as a literary type is convincing. The same or similar subjects recur in them all, the same situations, the same generalized handling, the same habit of repetition and stock phrases, the same rejection of claim to authorship, the same instinctive response by the unlettered audience to the often blind and illiterate singer, and even the same reward for the entertainer—'un vaso de bon vino'. Within the type, however, there are differences which have a regional significance and may be defined with reference to those balladries in which a more or less uniform usage has been established. In France, Doncieux distinguished between 'complaintes' and 'chansons à danser'; the latter are verses with refrains, capable of being danced; the former are not strophic, and their use of tragic material goes some way to justify the somewhat unsatisfactory term 'complainte'. It is not, however, in the presence or absence of the dance that one can seek a criterion of ballad differences. Many German and English ballads are unsuitable for dancing either because of their words or their tunes, though it is possible that their form was originally that of the 'carole'. In Serbia there is an apparently firm distinction between the songs of men or warriors (*junačke pesme*) and those of women (*ženske pesme*); the latter only are danced, and the former are not so much songs as recitatives. One is tempted to use these terms to distinguish between traditional narratives and traditional lyrics, especially as this differentiation of function between men and women could be supported by the example of other countries, such as Portugal. But the women's songs are not only by women or for women, nor are they uniquely lyrical or all suited to the dance. Lyrical qualities enter into ballads in various proportions, and have been held by some writers, such as the American Gummere, to be essential to the type. It is difficult to grant that all ballads are lyrical, since very many Spanish 'romances' are wholly narrative or dramatic,

and the same is generally true of Serbian 'junačke pesme' and Russian 'byliny'. They are only lyrical in so far as any relatively short poem excites a swift and simple response, different from the complex reactions to epic or dramatic poetry. Traditional verse may be dramatic narrative, purely narrative, lyrically narrative, narrative lyric, or purely lyrical.<sup>1</sup> The fifth possibility lies outside the province of this book, but cannot be wholly ignored, since the lyrical injection into balladry varies greatly in different countries. There are some, such as Lithuania, which have no purely narrative ballads, but a shading of lyric into narrative as subtle as the spectrum; in other countries, such as Spain and Portugal, the ballad is formally marked off from the lyric. Owing to their stanzaic form it might be held that English ballads are lyrical narratives, not pure narratives; want of such form does not prevent some short Greek 'tragoudia' from being almost purely lyrical. When themes migrate, that which is a story in one land is an expression of mood in another; when technique migrates, the dances which have made Portuguese women's songs lyrical are probably akin to those which have given cause for the narratives of Scandinavia. One cannot set an absolute frontier between ballads and folk-songs, though this book would become unmanageable were it to attempt to cover all traditional poetry. We can, however, observe the distinction of more or less, and keep our attention fixed on the narrative end of the spectrum. Our attention may be focused by those balladries (the Spanish, Danish, Serbian, and Russian) which have the most marked individuality, the most uniform usage, and the greatest aesthetic value.

In the Scandinavian North ballads are sung and danced, and they are named by words equivalent to the Danish 'viser' (singular 'vis'), but also to 'kvæder' and 'rimer'. The terms are, like most of those historically applied to ballad poetry, vague and by no means exclusive; but there arose in Denmark, and spread to Sweden, Norway, the Faeroes, and Iceland, a clearly defined 'viser' style, which entitles us to use this name for the northern type of balladry. The Danish 'viser' are narratives; the lyrical element is strictly subordinate, and chiefly enters through the action portrayed or the parallelism to which the strophic pattern gives rise. The verses are arranged generally as quatrains, but sometimes as

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in L. K. Goetz, *Volkslied und Volksleben der Kroaten und Serben*, Heidelberg, 1936, i, pp. 2-4.

couplets, and less frequently in other forms. The couplets assonate together; the lines of quatrains alternatively. Assonance, however, is too strict a term to apply to the elusive echoes of these verses, in which exact equivalence of rhyme gives way to assonance and assonance to echo, and the pattern of sound is like the ringing of a bell, now clear, now barely perceptible, in a high wind. This elusiveness one may take to be a consciously applied resource of the ballad-monger's simple art. The verses of the 'viser' concern the precentor; the chorus of dancers joins in with the refrain, which may be some simple ejaculation (as 'Binnorie, O Binnorie'), or some vaguely lyrical evocation (as 'when the norland flowers spring bonny'), or something relevant to the story itself (as 'Thor is taming his foals on the common' in the ballad of *Thor of Asgard*); it may be repeated within the quatrain, or some other refrain be there used. The rhythmic pattern of these lines is very free; the verses, however, are essentially four-accent lines, with considerable freedom in the use of unstressed syllables and the loss of one accent in the second and fourth lines. Many Scottish ballads have this form, though others have no refrain. There is also a remarkable community of subjects in the oldest strata of English and Scandinavian balladry which points to an original unity of impulse. Despite the ancient and respectable testimony of *Sir Aldingar*, it would be too bold to base this unity on the Danelaw and Canute's empire, which joined our island to Denmark and Norway in an imposing thalassocracy. Though that empire vanished, there remained commercial and cultural links between the seafarers of the North Sea. Scottish affairs interested Scandinavian poets as late as the seventeenth century, and Swedish balladry sings of an individual Scot, Malcolm Sinclair, who perished at Breslau in June 1739. While the Scandinavian countries show a virtual identity of ballad resources, the English and Scottish poems stand also in special relationship with the songs of France and Germany. Whether Denmark or the Danelaw witnessed the birth of this kind of folk-poetry is debatable; it is certain that the most numerous and worthy representatives of the style are Danish.

The same word (*Weise*) is found in Germany to denote rather the melody than the text of German ballads. For them there is only one word historically justified, 'Lieder'. In more recent times the word has been modified as 'Volkslieder', folk-songs, without greatly increasing its precision. 'Lied' may be applied to almost

any kind of poetry; there were the lost heroic poems of the Barbarous Age (*Heldenlieder*), the fragments that survive (as the *Hildebrandslied*), the *Eddalieder*, the swollen medieval epics like the *Nibelungenlied*, as well as the ballads themselves; and the use of the same word in so many quite different senses makes German accounts of epic and ballad origins confusing reading. To get rid of the ambiguity the word 'Ballade' was imported from English on the wings of Bishop Percy's fame. 'Ballade' stands for both 'ballad' and 'ballade', though the Villonesque 'ballade' has had little interest for Germany. 'Romanze', from Spain, is another term implying a narrative style, and still further definition may be sought by bracketing the two words, 'Balladen und Romanzen'. By some such means it is possible to pick out the narrative ballads of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Austria from the immense mass of traditional lyrical poetry which also enjoys the title of 'Volkslied'. The form taken by these narrative poems is stanzaic; the refrain is characteristically, though not invariably, absent from German ballads; end syllables are often echoed; the strophic forms are more numerous than in the north; the rhythm is intrinsically that of four-accent verse; and the rhymes are elusive. It would appear that North Germany enjoyed the products of ballad-singers before South Germany, and Saxo Grammaticus, who does not mention any Danish 'vise', speaks of the presence and activity in twelfth-century Denmark of Saxon singers. In respect of subject-matter there is ready intercourse between Germany and Scandinavia, but no such early and striking correspondences as to indicate an original unity.

German ballad poetry has exerted a stimulating influence on the Slavonic, Baltic, and Finnic peoples, her neighbours. To the south lies Czechoslovakia, a Slavonic spearhead embedded in the flank of Germany, and enclosed by Saxons, Bavarians, and Austrians. Czech ballads are stanzaic, not addicted to the use of refrains, and frequently in the immediate debt of German originals. The same is true of Hungary; the originality of Magyar ballads lies neither in form nor subject, but in the Gipsy spirit infused into the music. The Wends of Lusatia cultivate ballads of German theme and form, though in a Slavonic language and with, it is said, Slavonic characteristics in music. In Poland we encounter a balladry of a lyrical sort, and a great development of characteristic dance tunes; but the Ruthenians of Galicia and the Ukraine follow

the narrative tradition. In the Ukraine itself, the assonating, measured poems of the western type encounter the unrhymed 'dumi' in free verse, which are typically Russian. The lyrical preferences of the Poles are more marked among the Lithuanians, who have no pure narratives. The German rhymes were, as we have seen, elusive and frequently failed. In Poland these failures were the more noticeable since the rhymes could be attributed to accidents of declension and conjugation. The Lithuanian 'dainos' are formally unrhymed; but the accidental rhymes are numerous, thanks to grammatical forms and to the use of liquid diminutives. The poems are stanzaic, receiving shape from the use of simple parallel clauses. In Latvia the scale has been reduced; the verse is very often octosyllabic, and the number of lines only a quatrain. The effect is epigrammatic, like Greek distichs or Portuguese 'quadras'. The notion of stanzaic form is much weakened by this change; and in the poetry of their neighbours, the Esthonians, we find rhymeless octosyllables, marked by parallelism so as to form groups of verses, in many cases, but not actual stanzas. In the more narrative pieces there is no stanzaic structure. Finnish verse is of the same description, but insists on the use of alliteration as a formal element. The word 'runo' is significant; both German (as I think) and certainly Swedish influences have been exerted on Finnish folk-verse, alongside the indigenous turn for magical incantations.

The Anglo-Scandinavian and German areas, with the minor balladries, form one vast Nordic region, divided into two main parts. The Romance area is similarly divided between the Franco-Italian and the Hispanic parts, which commingle in the songs of Catalonia. The chief link between them is the fact that adventure ballads in Spain are chiefly of foreign, and immediately of French, origin; the same is true of ballads based on imaginative literature. The Franco-Italian popular songs (*chansons populaires*, *canti popolari*) fall largely outside the scope of this work, being no more than lyrical snatches. Those which we should class as ballads arise out of the narrative element in lyrical poetry, coagulating into lyrical narratives. Some of these have refrains (*chansons à danser*), but others are plain (*complaintes*). They are assonating; the older stratum uses the tirade as its form; the younger ballads, some dating back to the late fifteenth century in all probability, are in quatrains. The difference between tirade and quatrain is diminished

by the circumstance that the lines of the tirade are usually equipped with a medial pause, and the phrases of the quatrains usually extend over two lines. The difference lies in the more perceptible stanzaic pattern of the latter. A peculiar feature of this poetry is the rule that the two halves of a line must end in different cadences; if the one be masculine, the other must be feminine. This mark is found in Catalan ballads of the old French stratum, though not perfectly. The effects may be perceived in some Castilian ballads of French origin, though the rule is not known in Spain.

The narrative songs of the Bretons and Provençals are of this French type. So, too, are those of Lombardy and Piedmont, both as to form and subject. These songs tend to be younger than their French parallels, but are rougher and more narrative. Central and southern Italy depend on popularized forms of the Tuscan octave. The great mass of songs are either mere lyrical ejaculations, like the Sicilian 'ciuri', or epigrammatic octaves. Narrative ballads are few and derivative throughout the central Italian area, but they are rather more numerous in Sicily, so much further removed from the prestige of the literary dialect. It is a curious and significant fact that France and Italy, the two lands of intense culture in the Middle Ages, are weakly endowed with traditional narrative poetry; and something of the sort seems to have applied to the folk of the rich south of England. It is evidence of the incompatibility of complex society and literate culture with ballad poetry. On the other hand, French achievements in the 'chanson populaire' and popularized forms of literature have a unique resonance in Europe, and have much affected the ballads of Germany, Spain, and more distant neighbours.

The Spanish ballads are rhymed, but not stanzaic. The unit of composition is the octosyllable, which is not identical with the French line of the same name. There is no pause at the end of the octosyllable, but both the sense and assonance impose a pause after sixteen syllables have been sung. The style is strictly narrative. Style and subject-matter associate these 'romances' with the older epic poems which flourished from the eleventh to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and a theory holds the field that the 'romances' originated in fragments of epics. This explanation is not entirely satisfactory even for the epical ballads; as to ballads of adventure or of real life it can tell us little that is helpful. What is



remarkable about the Spanish ballads is their uniformity of metre and technique. They are homogeneous and cohere as a 'romancero'. The 'romancero', or ballad corpus, exerts a magnetic attraction by its own mass. Into it have been incorporated lyrical and other materials, formerly expressed in a different form. The grouping of ballads greatly increases their influence on thought and conduct. It is through the ballads that the Spaniard obtains his knowledge of national history and develops a consciousness of his racial characteristics. The 'romances' have radiated from Castile into Portugal, where old Spanish and new Portuguese ballads live together; and into Catalonia, where a later Castilian stratum overlays the old Franco-Provençal popular songs, often employing a mixed language. On the other hand, Catalonia has introduced to Castile many adventure ballads of French or foreign origin.

A third area is found in the Balkans. In the Balkans and in Russia ballads are unrhymed and unstrophic; their musical background is Byzantine, not the Gregorian chant of the West; they have themes and devices in common. Assonance is found in Rumania, though in other respects Rumanian songs belong to the Balkan group; and it has penetrated into the Ukraine in comparatively recent times. It is even to be encountered in Greek, in ballads indebted to Venetian influence. The true Greek practice, however, is not to employ rhyme or assonance; and this abstention is common to the lands which Byzantium has civilized. Thus a main line of division in European balladry separates the rhymeless East from the rhyming West, Roman from Byzantine.

The priority of Greek ballads from Asia Minor over all others in the Balkans is absolute; but the Greek collections are less rich or admirable than the Serbian. The verse-form preferred by the Greek 'tragoudia' is the iambic tetrameter catalectic; there is considerable use of the iambic trimeter and other more lyrical metres. These pieces are scanned by their accents (or more precisely, by the accents of their musical settings), and are thus different from the quantitative measures of classical Greece. They cannot be due, as one grammarian urged, to erecting as a norm those few verses in ancient tragedies which happen to scan accentually; yet it is hard to dissociate the accentual verses from the quantitative lines otherwise so similar to them. The transition between ancient and medieval metres in Greece, as in Latin lands, is obscure. The 'politic' tetrameters, as they are called, are a continuous narrative

measure. They are very flexible, but the rush and gabble of syllables detracts from their dignity.

The finest metre used in popular poetry is the Serbian decasyllable; it is flexible, weighty, definite, and the vehicle of some poignantly tragic poetry. Serbia lies on the frontier between Roman and Byzantine influence. On the one side, Dalmatia is Roman; on the other Bulgaria is Byzantine. The oldest recorded poems are in the peculiar measure called 'bugarštica', with an irregular number of syllables in the first half, and three trochees in the second. As 'bugarštica' implies Bulgarian provenience, and as Bulgaria is now a ballad area dependent on the Serbian, it would seem that we have in this measure the corruption of some Byzantine metre. The bulk of Yugoslav narrative pieces is expressed in decasyllables, with a fixed pause after the fourth syllable. They are unrhymed, but in other respects too closely resemble the old French epic metre to be considered indigenous to Serbia. The French measure appears in Italian verse as a hendecasyllable with pause after the fifth syllable; and so it would pass from Venice to the dependencies of Venice on the Dalmatian coast. The first Italian syllable is often unaccented. Omitting it, one obtains the Serbian trochaic decasyllable with obligatory pause after the fourth. A certain number of themes came from the West along with the verse, but most of the subjects and all the music is Balkanic. These narrative poems, when dealing with warlike subjects, are called warriors' or men's songs (*junačke pesme*) and are chanted, not sung. Women's songs (*ženske pesme*) are amatory, and are sung and danced in a wide variety of metres. Between the two types lie certain amatory narratives in the heroic verse. The decasyllable is found in Bulgaria, especially in ballads taken over from the Serbians. Otherwise the octosyllable is more common, and there are some interesting poems in free verse. In Rumania the line is an octosyllable or less; the style and many important themes are Balkanic, but the presence of assonance reveals the influence of Germany and Hungary. A special feature of Rumanian balladry is its pastoral background.

The fourth great ballad area is the Russian. The Russian 'stariny' or 'byliny' relate the events of a distant age: that of Kiev under Vladimir or Novgorod in its glory. Other narrative or historical themes have been added, but this sense of antiquarianism is a characteristic note. The lines are unrhymed, but they are also

unmeasured, save by a pause at the end and (generally) one about the fourth syllable. The only scansion applied to them is that of their music, which is still insufficiently known. Free in form, they enjoy an amazing freedom of spirit. No ballads show such wild variations of content. An individual ballad is a nucleus of character and incident; but the rest may vary without restrictions. The Ukrainian 'duma' is another ballad manner of this unrestricted type.

The unsophisticated adventures of many ballad heroes connect this manner with that of fables and fairy-tales. In Russia, between the folk-tales (skazki) and the ballads (byliny), there stands a class of prose-ballads (probyvalščiny), employing the measured formulas of the ballads, but not the linear arrangement. Elsewhere, also, ballads are seen to break down into prose or to be deliberately transformed. This occurs particularly to historical ballads, accepted as true accounts of events of national importance, and incorporated in medieval chronicles. So there are ballads behind a number of chapters of the Spanish Trastamaran chronicles as there are epics supporting chapters of the earlier *General Chronicles*. The verse sources betray their presence by runs of assonance in the prose and by clauses which are almost metrical.

Returning to the definition offered for balladry, it has been laid down that a ballad must be *short*. Short and long are relative terms, and must be so understood. There are many ballads which extend to only a few lines, it is true, but there are others which run into hundreds. The longest of the Spanish ballads, *Count Dirlos*, contains some 700 double octosyllables; *Stepan Dushan's Marriage* (*Ženidba Dušanova*) has almost the same number of decasyllables; Russian 'byliny' are extremely variable, but among them we may cite Kalinin's version of *Mihailo Potyk* in about 900 lines. There are also ballad-sequences, such as the long ballads of *Robin Hood* in England and *Marsk Stig* in Denmark which cover much paper and are longer than some epics. In general, the two eastern types of ballad tend to be long; those of the west to be shorter. The strophic form of northern balladry is an encouragement to diffuseness of a parallelistic sort, but tends to limit the length, since stanzas become wearisome when continued too long, especially to one tune only. Spanish 'romances' have been shortened by the tendency to drama, which has led to the omission of as much narrative as possible so as to leave the dialogue in the forefront of

the poem; they have been shortened also by the cuts applied by the early compilers, such as the anonymous collector of the *Cancionero de Amberes* (about 1545), cuts due apparently to the pressure of entertainers at the reunions in which ballads were sung. The length of the extant 'romances' is therefore less than that of their first form, which may normally have been that of short epics. The old French *Gormond et Isembart* has 661 lines, though it is a true epic and the text is virtually complete; the Danish 'vise' of *Tord af Hævsgaard* is actually longer than its original, the *Thrymskviða*. None the less, it is characteristic of ballads to be relatively short, since their range is from a few lines to several hundreds; the epic range is from hundreds to thousands and tens of thousands.

Ballad shortness is also qualitative, and that is what makes it worth notice. When it is possible to compare them with epics or novels, they are found to be either episodic or summary. The ballad is concerned either with one striking moment of the whole tale, or it conveys to an unlettered audience a general impression of a work from written literature. Sometimes both tendencies work together, as in ballads dealing with Tristan. In the Tristan story there is one scene of paramount interest: Isolt dying of heart-break stretched on the corpse of Tristan. To this everything else in the long novel is either subordinate (episode of the love-drink) or irrelevant (Tristan's numerous battles). In Spain and in Iceland an episodic treatment is given to the theme. The ballad-poets take into account only the last scene, though they work from different versions of the event. In Spain the poet has squeezed the last three chapters of *Don Tristán de Leonís* into a few intensely dramatic lines; the Icelandic poet takes more space since he heightens the pathos by repetitions. In the Faeroes it is still the death scene that occupies the attention, but the author of *Tístrams táttur* introduces the characters in a regular way and presents a complete novelette. This summary treatment appears in the Danish *Grimhild's Vengeance*, the Spanish *Marquis of Mantua* and *Montesinos* as contrasted with the French epics *Chevalerie Ogier* and *Aiöl*, and the Danish *Holger Danske* when compared with the *Enfances Ogier*.

These summaries are not only abbreviations of the originals but void of circumstance. It is in this respect that they differ from the summaries presented in such *Eddic* poems as the *Grípispá* and *Atlamál*, which are not as long as many ballads, and in this way

also the *Thrymskviða* is seen to be a more detailed narrative than the longer ballad *Tord af Havsgaard*. Precisely why Tristan and Isolt should be lovers, yet unable to marry, requires knowledge of many attendant circumstances in the prose romances. One must know about the love-drink, that Tristan wooed on behalf of Mark and was honourably bound to deliver Isolt, that there was no question of taking her away by force, and that there were quarrels and reconciliations and moments when secrecy seemed no longer possible. It is not so in *Tístrams táttur*. The ballad poet has selected the simplest of all motifs for this situation. Tristan's father and mother frown on his marriage with Isolt and send him to France to marry the French king's daughter. So, too, in the *Thrymskviða* we are given all the circumstantial details attending Thor and his associates as gods of Asgard or giants of Jötunheim, but any Squire Western would serve as the hero of *Tord af Havsgaard*. Ogier the Dane fought the giant Brunehaut to win the lovely Gloriana for his friend the Saracen Karaheü. How Ogier came to be in the Saracen camp and Karaheü in the Christian, why Ogier should fight for Karaheü on this occasion and how they had become acquainted, this is matter for hundreds of lines in the *Enfances Ogier*; but in *Holger Danske* the hero's imprisonment is taken for granted, and his friend is written off as a coward. Similarly, comparing the *Chevalerie Ogier* with the ballads of the *Marquis of Mantua* we find that the lynch-pin of the epic poem has been removed by the ballad-monger. The general theme is that a vassal, grievously wronged by his lord's son, is at last avenged. In the epic poem Charlemagne refuses satisfaction and Ogier is forced into rebellion, involving a siege, a long pursuit along the road to Rome, and years of imprisonment. In the ballad Charlemagne agrees to deliver his son to the judgement of his peers, and the action is brought to a swift conclusion, though the style is diffuse and verbose.

This avoidance of circumstantial detail, the broadest generalization of motif, situation, and character, is a leading characteristic of ballad poetry and essential to its traditional preservation. A ballad king is *the* king, a ballad Saracen is a dog of a Moor, ballad lovers are taken for granted and have all our sympathy, ballad situations repeat themselves and are transferable, ballad motives are the primary loves and hates, ballad language is formula, and ballad style is precedent.

These are the elements of *traditional* art.<sup>1</sup> Composed in common form, the ballad becomes at once common property, like a fairy-tale or legend. The author has no copyright, and the ballad only exists by virtue of each successive performance when it is what the performer makes it. It is not that ballads were, as the Romantics insisted, the product of the community working as a creator. Artistic creation under such conditions would be impossible; each ballad has its author and its moment of birth. On both these points we have information in respect of a number of ballads in different countries. We learn, in Spain, that Garcilaso de la Vega performed a remarkable feat of arms in the year 1455, on the 11th July, and that became the subject of a ballad; and that the conversation between Juan II and Prince Yusuf of Granada, reported in *Abenámar*, *Abenámar*, occurred on June 27th, 1431. In 1491 Queen Isabel the Catholic ordered her confessor, Fray Ambrosio Montesinos, to compose a ballad on the death of Prince Afonso of Portugal; the ballad survives and is in the veritable traditional style. The names of Alonso de Salaya, Pedro de Palma, Diego de Zamora, and Juan de Leyva, preserved by flying leaves of the sixteenth century, are as likely to refer to composers as to performers. In a number of French and German pieces of a domestic and somewhat vulgar type it was an established convention to indicate the real or putative authors by some description. The formula is: 'if you wish to know who made this song, it was made by three maidens' or 'an apprentice' or 'a soldier', &c. In 1812 F. L. Jahn visited Ferdinand August and commissioned a satirical ballad on the ruin of the Grande Armée. He gave a few phrases, such as 'cuirassiers in frocks' and 'ensigns without ensigns' and the opening couplet: 'With man and horse and wagon, so has the Lord them stricken.' August composed six verses which became popular for their vigorous scorn, and they were adapted in 1871 to Bourbaki's retreat into Switzerland. About 1830 Jens Christian Djurhuus, a crofter from Kollefjord in the Faeroe Islands, borrowed a copy of the *Saga of St. Olaf* to excavate from it new material for the dance. In the method of composition his *Ormurin langi* and Longfellow's *Building of the Long Serpent* are identical; but the one is personal poetry, the other is an excellent example of traditional balladry.

There is no personal right arrogated by such authors over their work, which is the absolute property of each reciter, to shorten,

<sup>1</sup> See R. Menéndez Pidal, *Poesía popular y Poesía tradicional*, Oxford, 1922.

extend, mingle with others, and transmit. Once launched the ballad is everybody's possession. Personal or local details will be pared away; situations, motives, and characters will be generalized. It will only exist at each moment of performance, and it will never be twice performed alike. The accuracy of the reciter's memory and his private interests will affect the recitation: he may make a humble parade of his store of technical devices, or accentuate the ornate, pious, or bellicose elements in his original. He may prefer a new tune or forget an old one; if his new tune be borrowed from another ballad (which is more likely than not), it will bring some of its old words with it. The ballad is fluid in the performer's mouth; and yet its variations are not infinite. As remarkable as the multiformity of ballads is their rigid conservatism. In the sixteenth century the ballad on the *Master of Santiago's Murder* (1358) had an altered beginning which may have come into existence within thirty years of the event; but last century the original commencement was recovered from Asturian tradition. Similarly, the second half of *Count Arnaldos* remained unknown until encountered among African Spanish Jews quite recently. In the Faeroe Islands there existed a Norse ballad, *Ole Morske*, without one Faeroese expression, which had been quite lost in its country of origin. Authentic Danish 'viser' have been discovered in the Faeroes and in outlying parts of Denmark, such as Jutland. The cycle of the Kiev heroes flourishes still on the shores of Lake Onega, but is unknown at Kiev, where a new lyrical manner has completely dislodged the epic style since the sixteenth century. A long memory is a pearl of price. If the singer forgets, there may be those in the audience who can correct him, like children reciting at a children's party verses known to them all. Singers give and accept challenges, and the one with the poorer repertoire or versions is likely to learn from the other. Ballad-singers must learn their art and work within the strict conventions of the traditional style; they are professionals or semi-professionals. We have many words which denote such persons: 'minstrels', 'histriones', 'jongleurs', 'juglares', 'skomorohi', 'guslari', 'forsangere', 'recitadoras', which denote function, and also 'kalêki' ('lame beggars') and 'ciegos' ('blind beggars'), terms which show why the singer has been forced to adopt the profession. In the last resort ballads, like fairy-tales and incantations, are the property of grandmothers and nurses, singing their babies to sleep or keeping children quiet

by telling stories. But such a restriction of public is a mark of extreme decline.

Ballads are *popular*. The word has given rise to difficulties because of the confused thinking which caused the Romantics to imagine a populace of poets, and because of the identification of the people with the plebs. This confusion is of long-standing, for the Marquis of Santillana, writing in 1445, speaks of 'the lowest order of versifiers, those who without any order, rule or count make these "romances" and songs wherein persons of low, servile condition delight'. No doubt they were delighted; but so, too, was the great Isabel the Catholic, and Queen Sophia of Denmark, and Tsar Ivan the Terrible. The generous heart of Sir Philip Sidney was stirred by ballads 'as with a trumpet'. The ballad people was the whole people, organized under its natural leaders. They prefer aristocracy to the proletariat, and often seem to be mainly interested in the lesser nobility, the 'Kleinadel' of Germany. It is the local chief, not the nation's king, who counts for so much in frontier ballads: the Percy and the Douglas, Kinmonth Willie, Sayavedra, Bishop Gonzalo of Jaén, Fajardo, Niels Ebbeson, Marko Kraljević, Ermak, Kolokotronis. In this respect also ballads differ from traditional epics, for the traditional epic has a national scope and its heroes are the leaders of the nation. Its inspiration comes from large movements of the folk: the Barbarian irruptions, the Viking raids, the crusades and pilgrimages, the defence of Anatolia against the Turk. The ballads are concerned with small settled communities, local heroes, raids, and excitements of no more than episodic value in the nation's history. Even a national movement, such as the Conquest of Granada, is broken up by ballad-poets into disconnected episodes of personal and local interest. Both the epic and the ballad, however, were directed to an unlettered public, not necessarily quite illiterate, but accustomed to get entertainment orally. They are addressed to those who have ears to hear; not to readers. When a ballad is written down and printed it may find a new circle of readers, but it becomes stereotyped and begins to shed the characteristics of traditional literature. A schism appears in the public; readers are different from listeners, and the former have more, the latter less and less prestige. Instead of addressing the people, the ballad-monger has before him the plebs, and ballads become vulgar and insignificant. It is to humanists that we owe the preservation of so many delight-



ful ballad texts; far more than were contained in the repertoire of any traditional minstrel; but humanism, however pious, is a deadly opponent of the genre. It takes ballads out of the line of oral transmission, into the textual; they are the less heard or performed, the more they are read and discussed. The advance of the habit of reading involves the shrinkage of oral entertainment. As they lose the better sort of patronage, ballads fall off in art and vigour; they are driven from the centres of mental life into outlying provinces; their topics lose elevation. In place of tragedy there comes horror; for energy, puffy pretentiousness; for humour, personal abuse and levity; for heroes, brigands and malefactors; for events of some consequence, crimes and casualties. Such vulgar ballads of the decline are very different from those of the best period. Chaucer summoned 'lordings' to listen to the rhyme of *Sir Thopas*:

Now listen, *lordings*, to mine intent,  
and I wol telle you verrayment  
of mirth and of solas.

Chaucer was probably not serious when he penned these lines; but a Swedish minstrel is rightly in earnest when he sang of his hero:

Him shall men praise  
in courtly lays  
amid squires and dames.

The ballad people—the whole people without distinction, lords and commons alike—danced in Ribe:

There dance the knights in scarlet braid—  
(*Tread it so featly, noblemen!*)  
and there goes Chrissie, so fair a maid—  
(*for men honour young ladies in the dance*).

The dance goes down through Ribe's street,  
the knights they dance both glad and fleet.

The dance goes down the Ribe's stream,  
the knights they dance in shoes that gleam.

Sir Riber-Wulf he danced the first—  
(*Tread it so featly, noblemen!*)  
King's man was he in truth and trust—  
(*for men honour young ladies in the dance*).

With the swirling polkas of the sixteenth century the old knightly round dances of Denmark retired to their present-day fastnesses

## WHAT IS A BALLAD?

—the barn and the hearth; but the old ballads keep their air of good breeding. We have the less reason to be surprised at their discretion and simple elegance, their avoidance of the coarse and clumsy, and the easy courtliness of many a phrase. There are crudities which belong to the epoch; but, though they appear in ballads, it is without exaggeration or prurient emphasis. Even in those scenes which testify to a code of manners less sophisticated than our own, the old ballads keep their poise and delicacy, like that of the good knights of old at whom Ariosto smiled, not without tears:

O gran bontà de' cavallieri antichi!

The klephts and haiduks of Balkan poetry are much diminished from the pristine excellence of Digenis Akritas and Tsar Lazar, Robin Hood is below the Douglas and the Percy; but they, too, represent ideals and give flesh to communal aspirations after liberty and generosity.

### III

#### PERFORMANCE

THE ballad, then, is a short traditional narrative poem sung, with or without accompaniment or dance, in the assemblies of the people. It is a complete entertainment, and is alive only when so performed. It satisfied more requirements than does a printed poem. The story told was enlivened by mime; it had a sprightly or plaintive tune, and if there were a chorus the public could join in; in many cases the ballad was made a pretext for dancing. The various types of folk-song encountered in Rumania have been named and classified in such a way as to give oral literature the same range and variety as written literature: there are lyrical 'doine', 'hore', 'colinde', and 'bocete', epic 'balade' and 'plugușori', dramatic 'orație' and 'irozi', novelistic 'basme', and miscellaneous charms and formulas which may be classed as didactic. Similar divisions might be established for the songs of the Balkans and the Ukraine. Were the distinctions exact, they might be more generally applied. In Spain, for instance, the 'romance' is epical, with only a slight lyrical tinge in certain ballads. There is even a formal distinction between epic and lyric in oral poetry, since the use of the 'romance' metre implies narrative intent. In some of the finest of these ballads the narrative lines are reduced to a minimum or quite omitted. There remain only the speeches of the opposing heroes; and with the aid of mime, these pieces would be one-man dramatic entertainments. The closing ballad of the *Infantes de Lara* cycle is a breathless dialogue between the villain and the avenger in the crisis of the action; it is more poignantly dramatic than the corresponding scene in Lope de Vega's play *El Bastardo Mudarra*. Such scenes may have satisfied the popular demand for drama, and so answer a paradox: for the Spanish people are endowed with a dramatic instinct which gave the immense harvest of their Golden Age dramas, and yet seem to have neglected the theatre throughout the Middle Ages. The Danish 'viser' are as vivid and abundant as Danish medieval literature is meagre.

The earlier modern collectors of ballads were careful to recover the texts, but tended to ignore the tunes. The tunes were omitted altogether, or consigned to an appendix, and it was only with the advent of Ludwig Erk that the same care was given to the music

as to the words. His work was continued by Franz Böhme, and has resulted in a collection which serves for model to the rest of Europe.<sup>1</sup> Germany still leads the world in the number and orderliness of her studies of tunes. In other countries practice varies considerably, and, as those books which record tunes do not often record *all* the tunes of a given ballad, it is extremely difficult to determine their interrelations. American collectors record tunes and words of living ballads, and lovers of English ballads are deeply indebted to S. Baring-Gould, Cecil Sharp, and other enthusiasts. We lack, however, such a compendium of words and tunes together as would give us the advantages that Germany enjoys.<sup>2</sup>

For their remissness in this respect the older collectors have been severely censured. It has been suggested that 'perhaps the fairest explanation is that literary scholars are tone-deaf, and as incapable of being moved by the melodies of *Lord Gregory* or *Geordie* as, for the most part, they are of appreciating that, from a literary point of view, the most significant thing about *The Wife of Usher's Well* or *Edward* is that the one will cause strong men to weep, and the other make their hairs stand on end'. The names exempted from this rule, however, are those of the scholars who have attained the highest perfection in ballad studies; and there are, in any case, some palliating pleas. To print texts only is a tradition dating back to the ballad collections of the sixteenth century in Spain. The reason was not tone-deafness, since these texts served as aids to the memory in concerts of chamber music. The publisher could rely on his clients to know the traditional tunes, though they might trip over the words; or, alternatively, they might prefer to sing the words to one of the new polyphonic settings which contemporary composers produced in abundance. On either supposition, those who bought the books of words did so because of their fondness for music. Further, though a ballad is not a ballad except when sung, there is no indissoluble connection between the tune and the words. There being no other scansion than the music, ballads were composed to tunes already existing;<sup>3</sup> an unemotional style is

<sup>1</sup> L. Erk und F. Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort*, Leipzig, 1893-4.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. J. Goss's *Ballads of Britain*, London, 1937, is an excellent anthology, giving a standardized ballad text and a choice of tunes. It is valuable on this account. For comparative purposes, however, one requires *all* the tunes, and these should be related, as in Erk und Böhme, each to its own proper variant of the ballad.

<sup>3</sup> See the headings in R. Liliencron's *Historische Volkslieder der Deutschen*, Leipzig, 1865-9.

adopted by the singers, so that the adaptation of music to words is not intimate; new tunes were fitted to the same words, and there was much borrowing; and the words do have artistic qualities which can be savoured separately. We are accustomed to do so with the Renaissance lyrics and sonnets, though these were devised for music. Ballads, indeed, are not complete when we associate words and tunes, for that may be very much less than their full performance. Singing *Tam Lin* in a drawing-room is something remote from the real *Tam Lin*, which was probably danced in the open air by the villagers on some specially appointed day.

The classic description of ballad dances is that of V. U. Hammershaimb in his *Færøsk Anthologi*. The Faeroese dances occur on Sundays and on three special festivals of the year. The islanders have few entertainments: chess, tricks with string, a ball game, wrestling, and field sports. The opportunity to dance thus stands supreme among their pastimes, and attracts the bonders from long distances, especially for St. Olaf's feast, when they honour the patron of the archipelago. Theirs is a simple ring dance, generally in 6/8 time. The dancers hold hands, and if there are too many for one ring, others are formed within, so far as space permits. They also know a variety of 'Sir Roger de Coverley', though it is considered rather fatiguing. The preceptor sings a ballad and the rhythm is stamped with the feet. The dancers pay close attention to his words, which must come clearly, since the characteristics of the narrative are brought out by the mime: hands are tightly clasped in the turmoil of battle, and a jubilant leap expresses victory. All the dancers join in the chorus at the end of each stanza, but the stanza is sung only by one or two persons of special repute. They must have good memories, since there is a prejudice against using the same verses twice in a year, and also against the use of too many different tunes on any one occasion. Hammershaimb went on to specify the steps of the dance.

Very similar conditions apply in the Balkans. A. Dozon<sup>1</sup> quoted from the brothers Miladinov the following account of a Bulgarian 'horo':

At Struga, on the days of less solemn festivals, a round is formed separately in each quarter, but on the great feasts (as Easter, St. George's Day, &c.), all the girls collect in a garden outside the town and form an immense 'branle', led by one of them who sings. Half the dancers

<sup>1</sup> A. Dozon, *Chansons populaires bulgaires inédites*, Paris, 1875, pp. xiv-xv.

accompany her and the other half repeat each line, and so on to the end of the song. The leader (horovodka) then yields her place and function to her next neighbour and takes up a position at the other end of the round. If the dance lasts long enough, these changes go on until every dancer has had her turn. Normally, however, the dance is led by the girl with the best voice and best-furnished memory. . . . One or two such are to be found in each village or township.

In later medieval times, writes Rodney Gallop,<sup>1</sup>

the name given to the French Round dance was 'Branle', a name which still survives not only in the country districts of France, but as far afield as Roumania where the 'Braul' is a favourite and very lively 'Hora'. In his *Orchesographie* Thoinot Arbeau gives the steps of the 'Branle' as danced in the sixteenth century, together with the tune which will be familiar to many from Peter Warlock's fascinating 'Capriol'. We should describe these steps today as two 'chassés' to the left followed by one to the right, and in this very form it still survives in the ballad dances of the Faeroe Islands, to which the Chain dance came very probably by way of England and Scandinavia. These ballad dances are done at the Feast of St. John and at the National Festival (July 29th). They are accompanied in the best traditional style by the singing of old ballads and folk-songs. The chain, closed at first, is later opened by the leader, and in its labyrinthine windings the dance resembles the end of the 'Lancers' at a rowdy house-party.

These steps are called 'stिंगarstev' by Hammershaimb, who also described the 'trokingarstev' (steps backwards during the verse, forward during the refrain) and the 'bandadansur', performed by men and women in two lines, with ribbons.

The Bulgarian 'horo' and Rumanian 'horă' are the same as the Serbian 'kolo' and Greek 'choros'. The Greek word is the source of all others, as it may also be of the French 'carole'. In Greek balladry we encounter the tableau of the maidens' round dance which is such a favourite in French and medieval Latin poetry. A king, out rabbiting, comes suddenly on the scene:

The golden damsels danced before, the brown girls danced behind them, and in the midmost of them all fair Zerbopoula tripped it, and as she moved her sleevelets gleamed, her collar flashed as lightning.

Ludunt super gramina  
virgines decore,  
quarum nova carmina  
dulci sonant ore.

<sup>1</sup> Violet Alford and Rodney Gallop, *The Traditional Dance*, London, 1935.

Beneath the castle of Beauclair,  
 they shortly raised large beams in air.  
 The damsels to the 'carole' go,  
 at jousting squires their prowess show,  
 and belted knights regard the fair.

The girls of Galicia and Portugal observed this ritual in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Their exquisite 'cossantes' show how they accompanied their mothers on local pilgrimages, and while the older women prayed, they danced on the glebe, taking care to tighten their bodices so that the watching gentlemen could admire their rounded charms. These 'cossantes' are purely lyrical. In France, in the thirteenth century, men began to take part in the women's dances.

These dances raise the curious and intricate question of woman's contribution to poetry. In extreme decline ballads are to be found on the lips of grandmothers and nurses, protected by the immemorial sameness of house and cradle. The memories of men are more capricious; they may even show aversion from folk-songs. While ballads flourish, the more lyrical and domestic poems are the special concern of the women. This may be acknowledged, as in the opposition between 'ženske' and 'junačke pesme' in Serbia; or it may be implicit in the texts. Greek ballads to be danced are often feminine in sentiment or theme; the Lithuanian 'dainos' are open to both sexes, but with a feminine bias; the same bias characterizes not only the French 'chanson populaire', but also, to a great extent, the whole of French poetry. A distinction may arise, as in Serbia, between lyrical pieces (whether ballads or not) with developed melodies and associations with the dance, in which love is the favourite theme, and chanted narratives of warlike acts, never danced; the former being feminine, the latter masculine. But the antithesis is not complete, since there is a considerable body of non-heroic verse which might be classified either way. Further, it appears that the women's songs go back to a century or two in which 'junačke pesme' were unknown.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, in the steps of the dance, where both sexes take part, the traditional round is the affair of the women in particular, while the men execute the leaps of 'virtuosi'. In France the poetry of the troubadours is under feminine patronage; doubtless for many reasons. One which must not be overlooked is that the 'choreæ rusticarum

<sup>1</sup> D. Subotić, *Yugoslav Popular Ballads*, Cambridge, 1932, p. 142.

mulierum', with their songs, had been a feature of French life from, at least, the sixth century.<sup>1</sup> These considerations raise issues too distant for the present book; namely, the indebtedness of all poetry to women.

Ballad performances, in which there is no dancing, have been described by Cecil Sharp:<sup>2</sup>

The mountain singers sing in very much the same manner as English folk-singers, in the same straightforward direct manner, without any conscious attempt at expression, and with the even tone and clarity of enunciation with which all folk-song collectors are familiar. . . . So far as I have been able to comprehend his mental attitude, I gather that, when singing a ballad, for instance, he is merely relating a story in a particularly effective way which he has learned from his elders, his conscious attention being wholly concentrated on what he is singing and not upon the effect which he himself is producing.

Mr. Neville Coghill has described to me his impression of ballads heard in the Blue Mountains of Virginia. They were sung to him without accompaniment, chorus, or dance. The singers were all women, who adopted a harsh, clear, nasal intonation completely devoid of expression. At the end of each piece the singer merely said, 'That's a pretty ballad', and passed on to the next without change of expression. (Similarly, Milá y Fontanals noticed that the only comments were 'pretty' or 'sad'; more lively epithets were used only for up-to-date ditties from the towns.) The effect of this impersonal singing was to leave the words of the ballad to do their own work, and for that a clear enunciation is essential. The singer plainly originated nothing in her repertoire. She might add or omit, as her memory served, or change the order of narrative, but the only modifications of which she could be capable were of a mechanical kind. Her repertoire probably went back to the seven-

<sup>1</sup> The texts (chiefly ecclesiastical protests) are collected in K. Voretzsch, *Einführung in das Studium der altfranzösischen Literatur*, Halle, 1925. See also G. Paris, 'Les origines de la poésie lyrique en France', *Journal des Savants*, 1892 (reprinted in his collected essays). The 'cossantes' in the old *Cancioneiros* are the work of men, but are attributed to women. There seems small reason to doubt that this poetry was autochthonous. C. M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Oxford, 1936, connects Sappho's genius with folk-songs. In Chinese verse one notes the prominence of women in the Confucian Odes, which are traditional. Later lyrics are chiefly by men, but such conventions as the tableau of the Deserted Wife must originally have been feminine.

<sup>2</sup> Olive Dame Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-songs from the Southern Appalachians*, New York and London, 1917, pp. ix and x.



teenth century in some of its items; but the fact was probably unknown to her, or if known, of no importance.

Though these songs were unaccompanied, Cecil Sharp had come across one singer who used a guitar, and the use of the 'dulcimer'—a shallow wooden box with four sound holes, three or four strings, plucked with the fingers—has been more than once described. In the Balkans and the Ukraine there are a number of instruments associated with ballad-singing, such as the one-stringed 'gusle' of Montenegro, the three-stringed Bulgarian 'gadulka', and the Ukrainian 'bandura' with many strings, as also wind-instruments like the bagpipe among the Greeks. The simpler the instrument, the more heroic the style.

A good number of English and Scottish ballads were sung only, but others must have been danced. Even when they were merely sung, the performance was probably more extensive than it is now in America. A number of preliminaries are gone through by Balkan singers before they are in the mood to commence the ballad, or sure of the attention of the audience. The programme of a fifteenth-century Spanish entertainment has been preserved (not that of a ballad-singer),<sup>1</sup> and shows that the performer began with a pious ejaculation, then recited saws to catch attention, then burst into a bit of the *Libro de buen Amor*, then more saws, an appeal to the public for money, &c. The opening sections of the *Libro de buen Amor* are themselves admirably adapted for recitation in the streets and squares, and include even the appeal to the audience not to scrape their feet.

Midway between dancing and not dancing is the curious ritual described in the *Kalevala*. The performance was, and is still, accompanied by an instrument, the 'kantele'. Väinämöinen's technique was as follows (Kirby's translation):

In his hands the harp then taking,  
very near he felt his pleasure,  
and the frame he turned to heaven,  
on his knees the knob then propping,  
all the strings he put in order,  
fit to make melodious music.  
When he had the strings adjusted,  
then the instrument was ready;  
underneath his hands he placed it,  
and across his knees he laid it,

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, *Poesía juglaresca y juglares*, Madrid, 1924, pp. 462-7.

## PERFORMANCE

with his ten nails did he play it,  
and he let five active fingers  
draw the tunes from out the harp-strings,  
making most delightful music.

Then the aged Vänämöinen  
answered in the words which follow:  
'Are there any who are youthful,  
of the noblest of the people,  
who will clasp their hands together,  
hook their hands in one another,  
and begin to speak unto us,  
swaying back and forth in singing,  
that the day may be more joyful  
and the evening be more blessed?'

Some singers have the custom of discarding clothes as they sing, and it appears that the true tradition must have been to sing naked. In this we should see the influence of the magical practices to which the Finns and Lapps were long addicted. So also the habit of sitting, generally on some stone. But the clasping of hands and the swaying motion presumably belongs to the round dance.

The dance is thus seen to be a secondary element in ballad poetry, but one which has exerted a profound influence. In Scandinavian countries all ballads are danced; but it is something of a 'tour de force' to have associated dancing with a style so wholly narrative. The older Scottish ballads were probably danced, like their Scandinavian congeners, but later Scottish ones and most English ballads were more probably just sung. In France the 'complainte' resembles the older 'chansons de toile'; if that be just, then both classes of popular song were feminine in bias, and the difference lay between those which accompanied the dance and those for sedentary occupations. It is unlikely that many German ballads were danced, and the only connexion would lie in the possible origin of all lyrical forms as dances. In Poland, however, an intense interest in dancing has accentuated the lyrical aspect of balladry so as almost to efface the narrative. In Spain the dance has given lyrics only, and also in Portugal; the ballad is sung or recited. In the Balkans danced songs are feminine, either explicitly or by implication, and have richer versification and melodies than the heroic chants of the men. Russian 'byliny' and 'dumi' are designed to be chanted.

## IV TUNES

THE history and mutual relations of ballad tunes constitute a subject as complex and interesting as the study of their texts. It is a field for musical experts, and into it I must not intrude, for lack of skill, save in so far as the study of the words drives me. For the words imply tunes. It is true that words and tunes are not inseparable, and that even when we have associated the two we are still far from reproducing the atmosphere of the traditional ballad. We are, however, further on the way towards sharing in the performance as it really was, and we know that the ballad could not exist traditionally without an accompanying tune, though not necessarily the same tune. Hence the tunes are found to have exercised a formative influence on the texts, which even strictly textual studies cannot ignore. The ballad is scanned by its tune. In Greece and Yugoslavia this scansion involves shifting the normal accents of the words. A Serb *reading* his heroic poetry finds enough rhythm to enjoy, and may even appreciate as reliefs the cases in which the accent conflicts with the trochaic rhythm; but if he will learn to *sing*, he will find there is much greater regularity in the scansion, coupled with a different sort of relief from monotony. In Russia, those who have heard 'byliny' sung recognize an elusive rhythm which cannot be discovered in the words; the words may be slightly altered, by the addition or omission of syllables, under the influence of the tune. The syllabic irregularity of English and Danish ballads is controlled by the melodies. In Czechoslovakia we encounter a number of pieces in distichs and triplets combined; by consulting the music we see that the metre is triplet, and that the distichs must be lengthened by repeating one of the lines. There are French 'chansons populaires' which might seem to be composed in tirades like the Spanish 'romances', until one notices that the tunes imply in the one case a highly lyrical utterance, in the other a narrative.

We may also feel reasonably certain that tunes have commended ballads from one people to another, when the words were unknown. There has been borrowing of tunes between ballads, as there has been borrowing of words. It is a likely assumption that the tunes may have assisted the words to migrate. Changes of musical

fashion have, in time, led to changes of ballad form. In both France and Spain, and also to some extent in Germany, there seems to have been a passage from melodies composed for distichs to melodies for quatrains, which has duly led to a preference for quatrain form in the texts.

The study of tunes encounters a number of difficulties which have not been adequately surmounted. The first of these is the lack of tunes, properly authenticated and organized, to study.<sup>1</sup> The earlier collectors tended to ignore 'wild snatches of song and obsolete airs', so that far too many have perished. They are now recorded eagerly. The process is difficult if the collector have only the usual rudiments of a musical education, since he may be misled as to rhythm, time, and pitch in pieces which employ fluctuating rhythms, unfamiliar times, and intervals no longer known to western music. The harm done by ignorant enthusiasm has been put at a maximum by J. Tiersot.<sup>2</sup> Collectors, he states,

under the influence of men of letters, who have understood the interest of the subject long before the musicians were aware, have either neglected the musical part (which was no doubt better than to mis-handle it), or have treated it with an incompetence which reveals the utter inexperience of the authors.

This censure may be too severe, since the writer has not troubled to descend into details. When those are given, it may appear that there is a good deal that can be used even in an erroneous transcription.<sup>3</sup> The naïve zeal of the collectors at least preserved them

<sup>1</sup> Apart from the magnificent work of Erk and Böhme, we owe to Germany the *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Melodien*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1935 ff., still in process of edition. John Meier, the editor, and his helpers have reconsidered the words and melodies already known and added new ones. They have traced, like their predecessors but more fully, the history of the texts, but they have, for the first time on a large scale, discussed the history and interrelations of the tunes. The forty-eight pieces published so far are all narrative ballads. H. Möller's *Das Lied der Völker*, Mainz-Leipzig-London, Schott, n.d., 3 vols., contains specimens of all European folk-poetry arranged on an 'ethnophonic' plan. It is a valuable book, and has many interesting notes, especially on the influence of given tunes on the great composers. The standpoint is predominantly lyrical; what this book calls ballads are sparsely represented, even for the great ballad countries. This is only natural, since the interest of lyrical tunes is often much greater than those simpler airs used for narrative purposes. The word 'bearbeitet' occurs frequently and is, for comparative criticism, somewhat unsettling.

<sup>2</sup> J. Tiersot in Doncieux's *Romancéro*, Paris, 1904, p. xli.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, C. Obreschkoff, *Das bulgarische Volkslied*, Bern-Leipzig, Haupt, 1937, p. 91, where he complains of two transcriptions by E. Bücken. The transcriptions give us the right notes and bars, but (according to Obresch-

from the gravest musicianly error, which is to set up a standard tune for a ballad, incorporating variants and ignoring different versions. The heresy of the standard text vitiates both words and music of the otherwise admirable *Romancéro* of Doncieux and Tiersot.

To pursue this theme of the difficulty of transcribing tunes accurately, we must further notice that the tunes are never quite constant, either throughout the individual ballad or at different performances. If the air has been fixed on paper, we still do not know its subtle application to the ballad. To meet this difficulty recording is now done by phonograph, and the records are then stored and interpreted at leisure. Even this process appears to be insufficiently delicate to capture all the nuances of Balkan singing, with difficult rhythms, irrational intervals, optional flourishes, and other complexities. C. Obreschkoff demands for this purpose the preparation of sound-films. Among the advantages that might accrue from so elaborate a process might be some certainty as to whether the intervals of one-third and quarter tones are really musical intervals or spoken. They occur in passages so rapid that the ear cannot precisely determine their value. In western countries this refinement does not occur, and the greatest difficulty appears to lie in the recognizing of modes and of the pentatonic and heptatonic scales.

It is therefore extremely difficult to describe ballad tunes; how much more to compare them. I cannot do better than repeat Tiersot's statement (op. cit., p. xliii); he is speaking of the typical melody of his ballads.

It is indeed usually very difficult to recognize this type. There are some melodies so distantly related that one would not expect to find anything in common in them, were they not associated with the same words. The tonality is incessantly changed by the varying sentiments of the popular singers. There are melodies known to us in an equal number of major and minor fragments: how embarrassed we are when we must say which of the two modes is to be adopted! Then there are alterations modifying the ancient scales, or introducing, on the other hand, into modern melodies intonations contrary to their spirit. Even

koff) wrong rhythms:  $3/8$  for  $7/16$  and  $5/8$  for  $9/16$ . The error would be important for an account of Bulgarian music, but not for international comparisons, since rhythms are very variable, without affecting the melodic curve. Of another collector who has done yeoman service in the matter, it was complained that his transcriptions were uninteresting.

between the closest variations of the best-preserved melodies one always finds differences, however slight, of inflexion or rhythm. There are some also whose relationship can only be divined through their general form, with similar rhythms and melodic cadences falling always on the same places, though the outline of the song differs completely.

The paragraph expresses our difficulties concisely; it also serves to illustrate the rather generalized language which musical critics of this subject too often employ. Critical language should be specific; it should be possible to state exactly what are the resemblances and differences between tunes, and to do so by means of symbols which are intelligible to all. For this purpose it is doubtful whether staff notation is convenient. Staff notation provides the best standard of reference, but on points of detail it is costly to insert fragments of staff notation in a printed page, and to do so is still to remain unintelligible to the unmusical reader. The use of musical notation involves printing volumes of large size, which are heavy to handle; and it is not at all convenient to enter on a card-index which can be shuffled and compared. To compare such tunes it is necessary to transpose them to a uniform key, since only then will the likeness of the contours become apparent to the eye. But it is hard to avoid a suspicion that transposition may injure in some way a musical text already fixed with some hesitation. There is, as we have seen, some doubt whether staff notation suffices to represent the subtler nuances of certain kinds of folk-song. It also implies—through its connexion with mechanical instruments like the piano—a greater precision of measurement than is found in the free narrative style of the human voice. It would be better, then, having fixed the standard transcription as accurately as possible, to leave it alone, and seek for some auxiliary notation, less costly and cumbrous, and more intelligible to the musically uneducated, more capable, also, of being entered on cards which can be shuffled and compared.

Such a system has been devised by S. B. Hustvedt, of the University of California at Los Angeles,<sup>1</sup> to serve to classify the English and Scottish ballad tunes. There are two things to be done: we must *record* the tune and we must *characterize* it. For purposes of record it is sufficient to name the notes, give their length, and add the key and time. A reference to the source of information will help in later verifications. By using ordinary letters it is

<sup>1</sup> See Note A, at the end of the book.

possible to put any ballad tune on a piece of paper not larger than 2 in. by 2 in., that is well within the smallest cards used in card-indexing. Thirty or forty such transcriptions can be before our eyes if we wish to compare tunes, replacing advantageously the one or two ponderous tomes of staff notation which are otherwise the most feasible. Also no one who has learned an alphabet can fail to grasp the notion of notes different in pitch, even if he were tone-deaf. To characterize a tune, we have to remember that ballad tunes vary, without losing identity, in key, pitch, rhythm, and ornamentation. All that is constant is the melodic curve, or significant parts of that curve. This curve makes a graph on the lines of the staff notation, but the graph may be represented quasi-algebraically, by using numbers for rising semitones, and letters for falling semitones. We need more than ten rising semitones, since there are twelve in an octave, so our numbers must be drawn from different fonts of type: roman and italic, or black-ribbon and red-ribbon on the typewriter. For most purposes of comparison the melody becomes clear in the first phrase of a ballad tune, so that it is enough to record it so. Identity of formula is very rare without identity of tune. The first phrases of the French *Roi Renaud* and *En passant par la Lorraine* happen to coincide in 72D (i.e. a rise of seven semitones, rise of two, fall of four); the complete transcriptions indicate differences which seem to exclude the chance of an association between the tunes.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, differences in the melodic contour do not necessarily sever the connexion between two tunes, since the difference may be superinduced on the original tune by some sort of ornament. Such ornaments are wont to reveal themselves in that they leave sections of the original tune in the same relative positions, that is, the ornament returns the same distance that it diverges. So, for two tunes of *Clerk Colvill* with formulas BC322BB and BC32BC52BB, we find the whole of the first in the second, with the addition of an inserted BC5 (i.e. five semitones down and five up). Of course, as we are measuring intervals only between one note and another, it

<sup>1</sup> See Th. Gérold, *Chansons populaires des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Bibl. Roman.), Strasbourg, n.d., Appendix 3, 7. Taking the first two lines of the former, which is in quatrains, and omitting the refrains of the latter, one may accentuate the similarity of the two tunes, without erasing the differences, thus:

*Roi Renaud.*

1 flat 68 U8

ddd/a..ab̄b/g.. ccc/d..cc̄b/a.r

*En passant.*

1 flat 68 U8

f.f/c.c/c.c/d.b/ c.c/f.c/c.b/a.g

does not follow that a given interval refers to the same notes. It does, when all previous intervals are identical, or when the variations amount to nothing, by cancelling out the new rises and falls.

It is clear from the above instances that we may use these formulas and transcriptions not merely to say, as the musical authorities do, that two tunes resemble each other, but precisely how they resemble and differ; and that without a costly process in print. We can submit the proof to any average intelligence for acceptance or refutation. We can readily classify and conveniently compare melodies, and relate the notes as closely as we please with the words. The formula for the melodic contour is independent of key, pitch, time, and accidents, and we can readily discount ornamentation by noting whether the new intervals alter the relative positions of the old. They will not do so if they sum up to nothing, or if they occupy such places as the beginning and end of the phrase.

The broadest affirmation for which the musical evidence can serve is that European tunes are divided into two classes according as their basis is the Gregorian or the Byzantine tradition. The Gregorian chant itself owed something to Byzantium, though it is difficult to know what, and the notion 'Byzantine music' is hard to define. It is a theory of music which is not entirely congruent with the practice of the Greek Church, and though there are numerous points of contact between Greek folk-song and ecclesiastical music, there seems to be no reason to treat them as identical.<sup>1</sup> What it amounts to in practice is that the Balkans and Russia form a musical region in which intervals of less than a semitone occur, and tunes are liable to arabesque flourishes. Greek tunes are both un-rhythmic and rhythmic, and use the modes of 're la ut', both diatonic and chromatic. Concerning the klephtic songs Mme Merlier informs us that they are unrhythmical; the musical line is as wavy as may be, and there is similar freedom in execution; the music does not really admit of being written down. Within this area the austere recitative manner of the 'junačke pesme' as sung in the Dinaric Alps and Montenegro contrasts openly with the elaborate melismas of south Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>2</sup> The remaining territories resemble the latter in style.

The existence of this Byzantine area of tunes is associated with

<sup>1</sup> Melpo Merlier, *Tragoudia tes Roumeles*, Athens, 1931, p. κέ.

<sup>2</sup> W. Wünsch, *Heldensänger in Südosteuropa*, Leipzig, 1937.



other common characteristics of the Balkans and Russia: community of religious background and legends as shown, for instance, in the prominence given to Elijah as a saint; negative comparisons and great freedom in making birds or natural objects speak; a fairy mythology which is largely common, together with reminiscences of Slavonic deities; absence of rhyme. In western balladry we have the opposite qualities to these, together with fixed intervals and a greater fixity in the melodic contour. The West abstains from ornament, save in the half-orientalized atmosphere of Andalusia.

Within these two large divisions it is possible to discover smaller ones corresponding to the nations and their languages. These form 'ethnophonic' groups, and the divisions are indicated in Möller's *Lied der Völker*. The reasons for such grouping are not so definite as to be fully intelligible to me; but they do correspond pretty closely with geographical facts and those groupings according to form and substance which we have essayed in an earlier chapter. Within the nation or community, musicians are able to discriminate. Sicilian songs have African and Greek colouring, and pass easily from extreme to extreme; in Emilia and Romagna the tone is minor, the changes gradual, the extension pentatonic, with a flowing melodic line and cadence on the tonic; Piedmontese songs are hesitant in the first part and of an attractive melancholy.<sup>1</sup> Andalusian music has highly imaginative cadences, which contrast with the European major tonal system in the north and centre. E. M. Torner gives an interesting demonstration of the changes suffered by a given ballad (*Pastor que estás en el monte*) in its passage from south to north.<sup>2</sup>

These broader considerations have their interest, but some observations of a more limited range throw light on the development of the ballad in various regions. The simplest musical style is that to be encountered in Montenegro, in the singing of men's songs (junačke pesme). There is not so much a melody as certain

<sup>1</sup> G. Cocchiara, *L'Anima del popolo italiano nei suoi canti*, Milan, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Torner, 'La Canción tradicional española', in F. Carreras, *Folklore y costumbres de España*, Barcelona, 1931, ii, pp. 29-30. There are two cadences involved. The second is an elaborate run of swift demisemiquavers:

34 U8: /(a.....abagf.gagf)/e.

In León, Madrid, Catalonia, the Balearics, and also Tetuán the corresponding notes are:

38 U8: /fe./er

There are similar reductions of the phrase in most other regions

accepted principles of improvisation, which are applied in an austere chant to the accompaniment of the 'gusle'.<sup>1</sup> The principal notes are *c d è e f*, of which *c* is slightly above our note, and *è e* slightly below. The intervals are thus not exact tones or semitones. The *c* serves in the exordium and antepenultimate; the *d* is normal or final; the *è* is penultimate, scornful, and transitional; the *f* is heroic. The reciter commences slowly (metronome 58) and becomes more rapid (metronome 88), breaking off in his excitement for an instrumental voluntary. He may change his time, and speed up or slow down a line considerably.<sup>2</sup> In any case, the performance is much more austere than that of the women's songs of the same region, and justifies the heroic minstrels in their claim that they leave singing and dancing to the women.

There is something fundamental about this way of chanting. The verse itself is probably not so very old, being borrowed from Italy, perhaps in the fifteenth century; but it is treated in so old-fashioned a way that critics have looked on the Montenegrin 'guslari' as the likeliest approximation to a Teutonic scop or skald or even a Homeric rhapsode. The problem before the reciter of the Spanish *Poema de mio Cid* was probably like that of the Montenegrin singers, save that he had to contend also with irregular rhythms, like those of Russian 'byliny' and Ukrainian 'dumi'. In the singing of these poems the performers improvise on general principles, but they use a range of notes and variety of pitch which are unknown in the highlands. This approach towards developed melody is seen in Bulgaria and South Serbia; in Greece

<sup>1</sup> W. Wunsch, *Heldensänger in Südosteuropa*, Leipzig, 1937, pp. 24-5. I give the information as I have received it. The transcription given below uses different notes.

<sup>2</sup> H. Möller, *Das Lied der Völker*, Mainz-Leipzig, ii, Serbian 29 is the famous ballad *The Maiden of Kosovo* (*Kosovka devojka*). The first four lines run:

2 flats 24 U8: *dcbā/cbag/b.a./g.../*  
*bbab/cbab/a.ḡr/*  
*gbab/cbab/a.ḡr/*  
*d.c./b.a./c.b./a.g./a..(ḡḡg)/ā.../*

The emphatic treatment of the fourth line, which is the third repeated, is notable. The austerity is obvious when compared with a woman's song, in lyrical decasyllables, also collected in Montenegro. No. 32 runs:

4 flats 44 34 U8: *ff/g.(gabg)ag/f.c...ff/g.(gaba)ag/f...r/*  
*44c..bḡ.c./*  
*c..ḡcagf/f...cc.../c.ḡ.a.gf/g...g.../*

The short line is a refrain. The two long middle notes, semibreves, mark the medial pause which occurs after the fifth syllable in the lyrical decasyllable, not the fourth as in the heroic decasyllable.

the line is subject to ornamental flourishes which are hard to fix in symbols.<sup>1</sup> In central and southern Serbia the two techniques overlap.

The musical conditions of the south-western peninsula of Europe are also interesting. There is a considerable range of tunes, from the simplest melodic phrases to complex polyphonic settings. The principal types are thus defined by E. M. Torner:<sup>2</sup>

(i) *Epic style*. Completely unknown 'at the moment when this poetical genre began to be formed by derivation from the great epic poems'.

(ii) *Recitative*. Characterized by an almost straight melodic line, formed by one sustained note and two or four cadential accents, according to requirements.

(iii) *Melodic*. The melodic curve is more pronounced, with more sonorous intervals, particularized rhythms under some time unity; the declamation is still strictly united to the requirements of the text.

(iv) *Expressive*. A melodic curve perfectly defined in every way.

The author proceeds to qualify these distinctions. As to the first style, it is necessary to proceed with the more caution since it is not actually known that ballads arose from epic texts. That is simply a theory. There are only two ballads which can be set beside the words of existing epic texts, and they show differences as well as correspondences. The epic texts, so far as we can trust them as transmitted to us, are composed in lines of no fixed rhythm. There is a medial pause and an assonance at the close. Half-lines of seven and eight syllables predominate, but there are more extravagant oscillations also. Some readers, especially those of Dutch or German extraction, have believed they could detect four accents in most lines, but that is not according to the normal spoken accentuation of the words. The declamation of Russian 'byliny' shows that there are ways in which irregular texts may be sub-

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the Bulgarian *Krali Marko* in W. Wünsch, *Heldensänger*, pp. 37-8, is in heroic decasyllables, but has this elaborate development:

*Metronome 80 U8*: ggggc..ab.(ab)g...d...cc.a.g...fa...g  
gef(.e)d.f..efed(.c)d...ĝ...  
c...a...g...d...f..efed.d...g...

(not to mention certain grace notes). Greek ballads may be very simple in style (cf. S. Baud-Bovy, *Chansons populaires du Dodecanèse*, Athens, Sideris, 1935, i, Rhodes 23, 24, Castellorizo 13), but they are liable to runs like the following (*Eugenoula*):

*Chromatic mode re, unrhymic*, U8: cccccddd cdèĝf(gĝfèc)c  
Collected in Rhodes, No. 33.

<sup>2</sup> In F. Carreras, *Folklore y costumbres*, Barcelona, 1931, ii, p. 150, citing G. Castrillo, *Estudio sobre el canto popular castellano*, Palencia, 1925.

mitted to a measure, itself perceptible but indefinite;<sup>1</sup> and this may have been the epic manner in Spain.

The Spanish ballad may have arisen because of a new musical manner, as well as through new subjects (civil and frontier wars, foreign ballads) and a new episodic way of regarding the old subjects. The unit of musical construction is the phrase for an octosyllable of text; therefore we may say with assurance that the ballad metre is octosyllabic. The unit was doubled to cover the sixteen syllables of each sentence, which was closed by an assonance and a pause. So the form would be

aa aa aa aa, &c.,

since the pauses group the musical phrases in couples. Salinas in his *De Musica*, xv (1577), gives an example of the 'antiquissimus et simplicissimus cantus quæ *Romances* appellantur quibus *historiæ* seu *fabulæ* narrantur' as a tune for *Count Alarcos*

U8: bbbbc . caa .                      bbbbc . caa .

The next steps were to introduce more definite time, and to vary the unit on repetition so as to close the couplet with something like a cadence. A tune for *Gerineldo* is

34 U8: ggbagg/b . a . . . /    ggbagf/gg . gr/

The ballad would then run in musical phrases like aa' aa' aa' aa'. This leads naturally on to tunes composed of two phrases:  $\alpha\beta$   $\alpha\beta$   $\alpha\beta$   $\alpha\beta$ . The words and music of such ballads could be written in lines of sixteen syllables if convenient, and that is how Salinas writes the music in 1577, and Nebrija the words in 1492; but the practice does not alter the fact that the unit of construction covers eight syllables only.

This early austere manner gave way, probably during the later fifteenth century, to the more developed phrases of quatrains. The transition may have been effected gradually. Repeating the octosyllables gives the form  $\alpha\alpha\beta\beta$   $\alpha\alpha\beta\beta$  for one tune of *The Month of May* (*Mes de Mayo*). Repetition of the words with variations on the melody gives us a tune for *Alhama* of the form  $\alpha\alpha\alpha'\beta$ , with refrain, and for *Gerineldo*  $\alpha\alpha'\beta\gamma$ . Any of these tunes would still fit Nebrija's description of old ballads, since they covered sentences of sixteen syllables.

The final step was the quatrain proper:  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ . It is so that the musician-poet Encina describes Spanish ballads in 1496, only four years after Nebrija had described them differently. By the end of

<sup>1</sup> See Note B, at the end of the book.

the fifteenth century the musician expected to set ballads to four musical phrases. This pattern slowly imposed itself on the texts, so that the artistic imitators of the ballad style in the later sixteenth century adopted the quatrain as the normal sentence. But for at least fifty years after Encina wrote, it would not have been accurate to describe ballad texts as quatrains; the sentences continued to end with the sixteenth syllable.<sup>1</sup> Ballads were falling into the hands of expert musicians, who gave them polyphonic settings for chamber concert parties. These settings are too elaborate to be indicated by the symbols we have been using to denote musical phrases, since the phrases are subject to many slight variations. Roughly speaking, however, the first sixteen syllables of *The Burning of Rome* (*Roma abrasada*), as interpreted by Matos Flecha<sup>2</sup> in the sixteenth century, to cite only the treble part, run like this: *aa'a''onβγγβγ*, where *a* is the first octosyllable, *β* the first words of it, *on* the last words of it echoed variously, and *γ* the second octosyllable, with flourishes. Such a fashion immensely slowed up the performance of any given ballad, and helps to explain why the *Cancioneros de Romances*, when they first appear in the middle years of the sixteenth century, consist of truncated ballads. There are many indications that the text of the medieval ballad was normally longer than that of those examples now accessible to us.

A careful arrangement of tunes will thus help us to divine, if not to ascertain, the history of the ballad form in Spain between 1350 and 1550. They may suggest, on occasion, some specifically foreign influence. The Castilian ballad is free from the rule operating in France and North Italy, by which the halves of a long line must not have the same kind of ending: masculine and feminine, or feminine and masculine endings are obligatory in the two hemistichs. A Castilian tune allowing for this distinction is highly indicative of foreign provenience, as with a very simple setting of *Rosa fresca* recorded by Salinas:

68 U8: *ee/d . ef . e/d . cc ee/d . ef . e/d .*

In Catalonia one encounters such settings without surprise.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A simple setting of this sort, for *Don Bueso*, is quoted by E. M. Torner in his *Temas folklóricos*, Madrid, 1935, p. 134, as now sung among the Jews of Tetuan:

58 U8: *f/g . b . b/c . b . c/dcbab/cba . b/cbgag/fed . b/cbg . e/f . g̃ .*

<sup>2</sup> See Torner, *Temas*, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> As in Pelay Briz, *Cansons de la Terra*, Barcelona, 1866-87, i, p. 105: *Los Estudians de Tortosa*; iii, p. 65: *La Escrivana*; iii, p. 111: *Los tres tambors*; i, p. 63:

Into the musical patterns of other countries there is the less need to inquire, since they are all more developed than those we have been considering. The traditional song in France took on a new lease of life in the mid-fifteenth century, and is highly lyrical. It is characterized by the use of nonsense refrains. Settings for distichs (or divided long lines) seem to be earlier than those for quatrains; but the quatrains certainly reach back to the same century. This kind of folk-song extended into Italy, deeply affecting the song-books of the early sixteenth century, and they are abundant in Piedmont and Lombardy. The North Italian tunes are sometimes more primitive in technique, and the style is more narrative than in France.<sup>1</sup> In Scandinavia couplets tend to take on the form of quatrains by inserting refrains between the lines, or by repeating the last line and a half of the previous couplet; or they are quatrains with a refrain at the close. These refrains are intelligible clauses, though not necessarily related to the matter of the ballad. In Germany the refrain is much rarer, but there is a tendency to echo the last three or four syllables of a line. In Czechoslovakia there is a certain disinclination for the refrain, and a cult of the triplet, while the music often shows a long note marking the middle of the phrase. So one may go on accumulating notes of this kind. If they add nothing new, they help to confirm the divisions of European balladry which we have already inferred from other evidence. There is no such sporadic scattering of techniques as would be the natural result, if the ballad was everywhere a product of the soil. Simple as they are, ballads are an art form and have to be learned.

The tunes must also be scanned by literary students for such light as they may throw on the diffusion of texts. The texts need not have the same history as their tunes, since the latter are various and are capable of migrating alone. When we compare the tunes of related ballads, we are more often aware of difference than of identity. None the less, there are cases in which words and tunes have travelled together, and it may then happen that the tune con-

*La Dama d'Aragó*. The first certainly and the third probably are French, the second is Provençal, and the fourth probably of Greek origin, but perhaps of immediate Provençal provenience.

<sup>1</sup> For instance, *Donna Lombarda* has a simple narrative setting ( $\alpha\beta$ ), and a more lyrical melody for quatrains, with the refrain thrice repeated ( $\alpha\beta\alpha\beta\alpha\alpha\alpha$ ):

2 flats 68 U8	3 flats 38 U8
fbd/f.d/cb    edd/c..edd/cr	g(c..d)/ec./    a(a..e)/dc./    bis
	edb/cr/    edb/cr/    edbê/..cr/    refrain.

The tunes are related as 543C3CBB to 521C.

tains some association of detail which is not found in the words; it may, for instance, be found in a particular part of the original country, or arise at some specified date. Were all collections of ballad tunes as ample as those of Germany, it is probable that we should be able to notice more migrations of melodies than at present appear.

A simple instance of migration (because of its relatively recent date) is *Marlbrough s'en va en guerre*. The tune may come from a seventeenth-century hunting song, but it suddenly sprang into popularity in 1781 through being sung by the Dauphin's nurse and taken up by Marie Antoinette. It spread abroad so rapidly that Goethe heard it almost everywhere on the road to Naples. The melody has the curves indicated by the formulas 4B<sub>3</sub>A in France (Doncieux), B<sub>3</sub>A in Germany (Erk und Böhme), and 9B<sub>2</sub>1A in Catalonia (Pelay Briz). The French and German tunes are identical in all but the first interval, and a detailed transcription would show that this affects only one note. The Catalan differs in the first interval, and takes the third in two stages; it also differs in time and key, and in the arrangement of the lines. In an older song traditional variations would be more numerous, as in *The poisoned Marchioness*. This also is a French song, referring to the hapless Gabrielle d'Estrées, who died in 1599, under the usual Renaissance suspicion of poisoning. The tune occurs in France in the variants BB<sub>2</sub>5C, B<sub>2</sub>25BBA, 522, E1ABB<sub>2</sub>2, and in Germany in the variants BB<sub>2</sub>2, BB<sub>2</sub>23C, BBC<sub>7</sub>3C. In the course of four centuries considerable changes have occurred in the melody, but one can still discern the group BB<sub>2</sub>2, or its mathematical equivalents, in most of the versions. *The Shipman (El Marinero)* is a ballad of French origin, and its passage from Catalonia to Castile is evidenced by the formulas 522BB and 522BBE. In the same way we may trace *La Porcheronne* from France to Catalonia, and *Lord Randal* from England to Italy. In really old cases of migration the evidence is often obscure. The migrating tune may have died out in its original land, or it may have been changed out of all recognition. So the famous *Herr Ribbolt*, which is our *Douglas Tragedy*, has one Danish tune (IC<sub>5</sub>214B<sub>2</sub>21) which might be connected with a Swedish tune (IC<sub>2</sub>12C<sub>2</sub>43B); another two (535A<sub>3</sub>5C and 5E5E<sub>5</sub>221A) which seem related to the Norse (5E54BG) and also to a simpler Danish tune (522D<sub>2</sub>) which resembles one in Norway (5221AB<sub>2</sub>1A). These last two tunes are the nearest one can bring

forward to the English (54BBAB), while there are two others in English which are connected with each other but apparently not with Scandinavia. One notes that *The Harp's Power* appears in Denmark and Sweden under similar musical conditions (21CBC912C1A and 1212CB2BBAB); but the very popular *Elveskud*, for which there are a number of related Danish tunes, is sung very differently in Sweden and in Norway. What we have to expect with the oldest ballads are variations, and it is never easy to be sure when variation has gone so far as to destroy all resemblance. It is very difficult to demonstrate migration within the Scandinavian area, though the words be almost identical. *Lave and Jon*, a very popular humorous piece, has three Danish variations of the same tune (5221C25BC, 52B221C2, 5A12B412) connected with the Swedish (52B22B23) and Norse (52B221C2, 322B2DA12); but one Norse and two Danish melodies seem unrelated with this or each other. It seems as if we must credit the Scandinavian minstrels with a higher degree of musical, than textual, inventiveness.

Where a considerable number of tunes have been preserved, they may be gathered into classes, and in the case of a migratory ballad, we may note which is the class of the melody that has travelled. The fine German ballad of *The Castle in Austria* is a convenient instance. Erk and Böhme offer us fourteen airs. One group has the formulas 2212C and 2212CD, which correspond with the Norse 221C52BC; a German variant is B212C, corresponding to the Danish B25BC. An entirely different class contains tunes with the formulas A4ABA and E8ABA, corresponding to the Swedish A1E8AD5A. They show there has been a divergence between the Swedish tradition and that of the neighbouring lands. The Swedish use their tune also for the ballad of *The Sultan's Daughter*, which has quite different formulas in Germany and the Low Countries (5223CAB, 523A, 2127EB, 21ABB, 43BCB4).

*Zwei Wasser, Zwei Königskinder* and *Hallewijn* are ballads, probably originating in the Low Countries, which have attained universal popularity. The first two are forms, lyrical and narrative respectively, of the Leander saga. German and Dutch tunes can be grouped according to their first intervals, as 9 (9BBoA3CB, 9BB, 9D22B, 9BBA3E), 5 (521A1C21A), and 3 (3AB2122, 21AB2122), while the formula 54122BBA links the first two groups. The Czech 225BBA is based on 9BBA. Denmark used



tunes of the first group (92BBA12BA, 543C1ADAB2), and also the third (521AB2122, if we ignore the first interval, but this tune is midway between the second and third groups). The end of the third formula appears in Sweden (21C21C22122), and the French 5AB212B contains the group AB212 which appears in the third group of tunes. The relationships are very complicated, but they clearly appear on analysis. Similarly, in the *Hallewijn* melodies there is a grouping of intervals (2212) which appears in a fair state of preservation in German, Danish, Swedish, and English. Another German group has a cadence BBA, which is to be found in the Lusatian (or Wendish or Sorb) tune.

The object of this chapter, which has already gone too far for a tyro, is to show that the history of tunes is a necessary adjunct to the discussion of ballad form and propagation. If that be clear, the application may well be left in more expert hands. The expert I merely entreat to speak in preciser accents than hitherto, and to use such signs and reasonings as are readily understood by the common reader.

[W. Danckert's *Das europäische Volkslied*, Berlin, 1939, unfortunately came too late to be used for this chapter.]

## KINDS AND DATES

**H**ISTORICAL ballads form a class which it is comparatively easy to separate from all others. They arise immediately out of the events they narrate, not later than within the memory of living men. Any corpus which is rich in ballads of this kind offers an easy and sure chronology; for not only are the events datable, but there are often other lines of testimony as to the age of the ballad. It may, for instance, have provided material for a chronicle or be the subject of an allusion. In the older strata of European balladry, historical pieces are, like narratives in general, copious; and the earliest dates they imply are as old as any that can be fixed for the genre itself. In the course of time historical ballads die out more rapidly than others, and they are seldom passed on to other nations. If they migrate (as the French ballads on François I's imprisonment and Gabrielle d'Estrées's death have passed to Italy and Germany), this will generally be due to their novelesque or emotional interest, or to the charm of a tune. Because they are perishable and stationary elements of the older epochs of balladry, they are not abundant in ballad corpora of secondary formation. Their absence is one of the signs of dependence, as of Bohemia on Germany and Bulgaria on Serbia.

National themes are encountered among such ballads in episodic or personal aspects. The ballad does not compete with the epic poem. More often the theme is partisan or local rather than national: civil wars and frontier defence. The pieces may cohere round the name of a national hero, like Marko Kraljević and Marsk Stig; and in such a case the historical element may become exceedingly tenuous. In Russia there were persons known as Dobrynja Nikitič, Aljoša Popovič, Vladimir, &c., and that is almost all that is historical in the Kiev cycle. One may then justly doubt whether these 'byliny' should be classed as historical at all, or merely as adventurous. They are accepted as historical by the hearers, who are not much preoccupied with the accuracy of the details. On a somewhat lower scale are those ballads which take for heroes the persons of outlaws, haiduks, klephts, robber barons, bandits, murderers, and plain thieves; and these, too, have their descending order of merit. At the one end of the scale we encounter

Robin Hood and Marko Kraljević, who are regarded as almost wholly admirable. Old Novak, the haiduk, is less heroic than Marko Kraljević, but of invincible independence. There is some esteem to spare for a robber baron like Lindenschmid, who is captured and executed, after a gallant fight; the Catalan Serrallonga and those of his kidney are used to point a vulgar moral about evil communications which lead to the scaffold. At last we read notices of a revolting nature or shocking tragedies. Whether such have historical backing is not always easy to ascertain; the treatment is so generalized that the event might be merely imagined in order to point a moral. It is then uncertain whether the piece should be called historical or not. Fortunately the dilemma is not an important one, since the base metal of most of these pieces does not deserve assaying. The descending curve of merit has also its chronological aspect, since the more admirable heroes belong to the earlier epochs when the people remained homogeneous, but ballads of bull-fighters and murderers are plebeian and late. We have to add to this class those ballads which belong to professions that have themselves an historical date: professions such as the military, with its succession (in Germany) of Swiss pikemen, German reiters and landsknechts, the victims of the *corvées* of the eighteenth century, and modern conscripts. Historical data are often embedded in their songs—more richly in the older strata—though the permanent subject is the vicissitudes of the profession. With these ballads also the exact repartition is a matter of tact, and a piece may be given a double classification.

For historical ballads it is important that there should be some direct connexion between the song and the event, condition, or person it represents. A ballad carved out of a chronicle is not historical in the same sense, though it may be convenient on occasion to overlook the difference. But we should rather insist on the difference in the case of epical ballads. There was a Theodorich of Verona, but the ballads of Dietrich von Bern have no direct relationship to him, but only to the hypothetical epics and real saga which lie between. The same is true in Spain of Ruy Díaz the Cid, Count Fernán González, or King Rodrigo. The epics on the first two and the traditions about the last may be rightly described as historical; but the ballads are dependent on the previous oral and written literature, and are therefore akin to other literary ballads. It is true that the epical and historical 'romances'

combine to present the Castilian with an impressive summary of his national history; but to class them as historical in the strict sense makes comparison with other ballad corpora difficult, and induces errors in criticism. There are here also cases open to doubt. The exploits of Il'ja of Murom, in Russia, form something like an epic plot, but there is no external evidence for such a poem. To include his ballads among the historical ones of Kiev is to stretch the term to its widest limits. In Greece there are extant ballads and epics concerning Digenis Akritas, and their relationships are open to doubt. If we class them as epical rather than historical, we do so for convenience of comparison only.

In a second class we may distinguish those ballads which depend on a previous literary tradition, whether written or oral. Despite etymology, the mere writing down of a poem or tradition does not constitute literature; they may be carried in the memory with equal precision of outline and detail. Since ballad literature is essentially oral, the dependence on oral originals is the more important for criticism, and it has been explained by various theories which we must examine later. Here it will suffice to enumerate the principal possibilities. The original may be a traditional epic poem or an Eddic fragment or a saga based on the epic poem or tradition. The more ancient narratives of this type are Germanic, the youngest are Castilian. The former give rise to speculations of wide range, full of inevitable hypotheses; the latter give narrower observations of a maximum certitude. Romantic sagas may also be the sources of ballads, together with novels and novelettes, such as those of the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles in Spain. There are cases in which the novelesque form is obvious (e.g. the Castilian *Count Arnaldos*), but there is no known original; and there are ballad novels, like *Axel Tordsson* or *Henry the Lion* or *Tannhäuser*, which might be classified as literary or as adventurous. In such cases one's choice will be influenced by convenience of arrangement within a particular corpus (*Tannhäuser* may also be deemed historical), taking due note of any formulas of a definitely literary sort. These include such well-known conventions as the pastoral, dawn songs, assignations, debates, and tall stories. In the case of *Tannhäuser*, the opening is an 'aubade' and the motif of Frau Venus is drawn from courtly literature. There is, indeed, no absolute line separating any ballad from written literature, and in some countries, like France and Italy, the most 'popular' songs are shot

through and through with literary reminiscences. The lower border of the literary class of ballads must necessarily be left fluctuating.

A small, but very special, class is composed of those ballads which depend on classical originals: the legends of Leander, Pyramus, Helen, and Troilus. They are interesting for the distance they have travelled from their literary originals, coupled with their undoubted popularity. The wrestles between first Digenis, and then various unnamed young men, and Charon are doubtless survivals of the old legends of Hercules.

Religious ballads imply a literary tradition of a special type. The motive for creating or singing a religious piece is not mere entertainment, but edification (coupled with mendicity). They are recorded earlier than profane verses, and they show more or less influence from the original text. Genuinely popular carols<sup>1</sup> have fragments of Latin or are otherwise bilingual, and are not so wholly entrusted to tradition as to come within the corners of this study. The greater number of religious ballads are open to correction from the scriptures, and those which are of most interest to us are those which have been so transformed by tradition as to sever the biblical connexion. This is the case with the *Hallewijn* ballads, so unlike the history of Judith, and *The Samaritan Woman*, confused with the Magdalene and made into the type of the unpardonable sinner, or the Serbian account of Peter's mother, in the same function. Other biblical suggestions are the story of Benjamin's sack (the Spanish *Pilgrim to Compostela*, Russian *Forty Pilgrims*), Potiphar's wife and Joseph (*The Chaste Servant* in Germany), Dives and Lazarus, and the hardness of Dives' wife's heart (a begging ballad), Samson as a Russian 'bogaty', Solomon tricked by women, Judith and Holofernes (*Hallewijn*). Then there are saints' legends, especially the Marian legends and narratives concerning St. Catherine, St. George, St. Lawrence, and St. Nicholas. Finally, there are many ballads which point some religious moral, particularly those which censure stinginess. The inspiration of these pieces is everywhere the same, after allowance is made for the difference between the Greek and Roman churches; coincidence in religious balladry is, consequently, no evidence of direct association between two pieces. For example, the apocryphal miracle of the roasted capon, which flapped its wings and crew, is associated

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Greene, *The Early English Carols*, Oxford, 1935.

with *St. Stephen* in England and the *Pilgrim to Compostela* in Spain, but the two ballads are not akin.

In more didactic or lyrical styles the religious class stretches out to cover small dramas; death, resurrection, and the judgement; prayers, praise, thanks, consolation, confession, legacies; and the complete calendar of church festivals. This fullness of material is especially noticeable in Balkan balladry.

To the remaining ballads the word adventurous may be applied. They relate some event which is interesting; which is an adventure. Any more precise term would not cover the miscellaneous contents of this class, which receives those not otherwise placed. It is not homogeneous. One group, most ample in Lithuania and Latvia, is the mythological and superhuman. The gods, Sun and Moon, appear as actors; or there are superhuman characters drawn from the fairy world of decadent paganism. Earth spirits—elves, dwarfs, kobolds—water spirits—nixes, mermen, swans—'vile' and nereids, dragons and snakes, changelings and bewitched persons, revenants, death and Charon, the Venusberg and the Earthly Paradise, are themes of ballads reverend for their age or moving for their mysterious force. Then there are innumerable love ballads: encounters, happy love, opposition overcome, sorrow and separation, tragedy, prevention of bigamy or incest, reunion, adultery, murder for love, incest, rape, faithfulness in trial, the sad case of the nun, bride-stealing, death. It is always a material consideration in ballad poetry whether a crime be a 'crime passionel'. There are ballads on the crimes which seem popularly most abhorrent: cruelty by step-parents or mothers-in-law, poisoning, murder of husband or wife, parenticide, and infanticide, the worst of all. These pieces may be reports of real crimes or plebeian ballads of morbid tendency. The number of ballads dealing with prisoners, their misfortunes and escapes, are a searing comment on human kindness: we find the innocent in prison, who is executed or escapes, or languishes with only a bird for consolation; the prisoner who escapes by the aid of the jailer's daughter, sometimes marrying her, sometimes deserting; the ruses of devoted wives and their self-sacrifice; rescue by force or by counterfeiting death. If we do not open a section of ballad novelettes under the literary heading, we shall have to record here such highly developed adventures as those of Tannhäuser, the noble Moringer, Bluebeard, Henry the Lion, the Count in the plough, Wilhelm Tell, the girl who went to

war, and the squire of low degree. These are ballads which arise from many motifs which have cohered into a fully developed tale, which travels as a unit away from its original focus.

These types of ballads are variously distributed in the different countries, and each has been made, in consequence, the basis of a theory as to the date and nature of ballads. To take the richest areas only: Spain has a sturdy tradition of historical and epical ballads, but borrows material from foreign romances and almost all her adventure pieces. England and Scotland are poor in epic fragments, mediocre in history, but rich in adventure ballads, with special reference to the supernatural. In Denmark there are these things, and a sturdier tradition of epos and history. Germany has very many semi-popular historical poems,<sup>1</sup> of which a considerably reduced number may be admitted as traditional ballads. There are a few epical derivatives, less close to their originals than the Danish 'viser'. The lyrical element is strong, and in course of time virtually submerges the narrative; German balladry thus appears especially songful. If we can accept the cycles of Kiev and Novgorod as historical, Russian 'byliny' are almost wholly historical; as are also the 'dumi' of the Ukraine. There are no epics extant related to these pieces, nor much likelihood that there were. The lack of adventure ballads is compensated by the heavy proportions of romance in the so-called historical pieces, so that they have been described, not unjustly, as wholly 'sagenhaft'. The mythological themes are few; lyrical treatment is kept for other kinds of folk poetry. In Serbia there were no epics, and no epical ballads. The historical series is exceptionally fine and veracious. Adventure ballads fall into a debatable land between the heroics of the men and the erotics of the women. Lyricism is not a quality of the 'junačke pesme'. In Greece we have epics and ballads in a relation that has not been made clear. The historical ballads are poorer and later than in Serbia, and the adventure ballads more important. The lyrical element in Greek folk-poetry is more prominent, and is not excluded from narrative pieces. It is in Lithuania and Latvia that mythological balladry reaches its fullest development. There are only lyrical ballads, with some narrative intermixed; no ballad novelettes, and only scattered allusions to historical events. The

<sup>1</sup> Collected by R. von Liliencron, *Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen*, Leipzig, 1865-9, and continued by other collectors for later centuries. The selection of true ballads from this mass has been made by Erk and Böhme.

chief occupation of the singers in all four east Baltic lands is to sing lyrics appropriate to domestic occasions. In Finland we have to take account of an exceptionally rich literature of magical formulas.

As a result of this uneven distribution, critics in different countries have exalted now one, now another, of the types as *the* ballad 'par excellence'. Andrew Lang,<sup>1</sup> stimulated by the rich supernatural element of our poetry, was induced to declare that ballads 'were the immemorial inheritance at least of all European peoples', and that their stock situations and ideas are 'of dateless age and world-wide diffusion'. Isolated motifs are, indeed, often universals, but their coherence in the extant ballads is by no means 'dateless'. W. Schmidt, writing in *Anglia* xlix, considers that our oldest truly traditional ballads are of the fourteenth century only. There is clearly a difference between the history of an isolated motif, which may be traced from Homer and Herodotus through Greek mythology and German fairy tales, and the history of the complex utterance which is a ballad. Chodzko drew a similarly exaggerated inference from the mythology of the Lithuanian corpus, assigning all such pieces to the pagan era before Vladimir of Kiev. We know, however, that paganism was rife in the Lithuanian woods as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so that a mention of Perkunas or Laime need not be so very old.

If attention be paid to the religious ballads there is a tendency to slip into a theory of clerical origins. The English *Judas* is our oldest recorded ballad, going back to the thirteenth century, and the German *Armer Judas* has been often cited since the fifteenth century, being a rendering of a Latin hymn of the century previous. In other countries there is no similar priority to be claimed for the religious poems, which have always one unusual feature; viz. the ease with which they may be compared to a literary text, the Bible, known to all.

Spanish criticism has insisted on the importance of the epical ballads. Having shown that the ballads are always younger than the epics, the great interpreters have gone on to a theory of ballad origin by fragmentation of epics. The theory clearly will not apply to countries which have had no traditional epics, though they have abundant ballads. In Scandinavia we find a prose text inserted between the epos and the corresponding ballads, viz. the *Thidreks-*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ballads', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.



*saga*; and in other cases fragmentation will not account for the wide differences between epos and ballad. The same is true of Germany, where the ballads are even further removed from the epics. Nor will fragmentation explain the historical ballads of Spain, which are not fragments of long poems but songs essentially episodic; nor explain the borrowing of adventurous matter from abroad. What traditional epics can teach us is, chiefly, the relatively late rise of the ballad genre. In Spain the 'cantares de gesta' were still flourishing in 1344, when the scribes of the *Second General Chronicle* copied in prose the text of a second *Infantes de Lara*, unmistakably epical.<sup>1</sup> The styles are successive, not concurrent,<sup>2</sup> so that the mid-fourteenth century is indicated as a likely moment for the rise of the Castilian ballad. Similarly in Scandinavia the *Eddic* poems come down to the eleventh century, and they employ a rhymeless, alliterative technique quite distant from the 'vise' style. The rhymed, roughly syllabic, linguistically medieval 'viser' are thus clearly not older than the twelfth century, at the soonest. The interposition of the early thirteenth-century *Thidrekssaga* forbids placing a number of the epical 'viser' earlier than then.

The epic evidence of Greece is more difficult to assess. We have a clear allusion to ballad singers in the tenth century: 'accursed Paphlagonians who put together songs about the experiences of famous men, singing them at an obol apiece at each house.'<sup>3</sup> Digenis Akritas has been identified as an Anatolian turmarch who fell at Kopidnadon on the Euphrates frontier in 788. H. Grégoire seeks to carry his epic back to the mid-tenth century, and represents the ballads as anterior and independent. The argument is not entirely conclusive, but may serve to carry the ballads of Asia Minor back at least to the twelfth century, if not sooner. We

<sup>1</sup> See R. Menéndez Pidal, *Leyenda de los Infantes de Lara*, Madrid, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> W. C. Atkinson, in the *Modern Language Review*, xxxii, 1937, and *Hispanic Review*, iv, 1936, argues that the epics flourished into the middle of the fifteenth century, so that the epical ballads may be quite recently derived. One may say that an epical ballad may be created by any minstrel who has a memory of an epic text, that is to say, perhaps quite late; but there is no such evidence of a vigorous crop of new epics in the fifteenth century as in the *Segunda Crónica General* of the mid-fourteenth.

<sup>3</sup> Arethas of Caesarea (850-932), cited by S. Kyriakides, and after him by H. Grégoire. The latter's articles, 'Le tombeau et la date de Digenis Akritas' and 'Autour de Digenis Akritas', *Byzantion*, vi, vii, 1931-2, are the principal authority for Greek ballad and epic origins.

discover their 'politic' metre in much use at that date. By way of contrast, the ballads of the mainland are rather late. Those of an historical cast open with a fragment on a siege of Adrianople, which may be the siege of 1361; then follow some laments for the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and for other disasters of that kind; but the full flow of historical ballads only begins with the klephts of the seventeenth century and later. Among the adventure ballads, also, there is a marked Anatolian priority.

Yugoslav men's songs (*junačke pesme*) are older than the 'tragoudia' of the mainland Greeks, but younger than those of Asia Minor. The oldest strata concern the disaster at Kosovo in 1389; they are the Kosovo ballads proper, and the ballads of Marko Kraljević, who was a contemporary of the battle. M. Braun<sup>1</sup> believes that one ballad report was heard by the Russian pilgrim Ignatii in that very year. It is, at any rate, virtually certain that the substance of such ballads was rendered into Italian towards the end of the fifteenth century, and also into Polish; while there are ballad traces in Constantine the Philosopher's life of Despot Stepan Lazarević, composed in 1431-2. There is no evidence of '*junačke pesme*' before the great disaster. Women's songs are a century older, but they also had a definite beginning. As for the neighbouring countries, existing Bulgarian ballads are younger than the Serbian, and Rumanian historical ballads began under Serbian influence in the sixteenth century.

Russian 'byliny' are more difficult to date. The *Thidrekssaga* acknowledges 'Ilias jarl af Greka' among well-known epic heroes of the thirteenth century, though the reference is not such as to exclude the chance that his name appeared in poems unlike the extant 'byliny'. Il'ja of Murom is unhistoric. There are various suggested prototypes of Dobrynja Nikitič and Aljoša Popovič, and the two most plausible perished at the rout on the Kalka in 1224. The ballad Vladimir combines the characteristics of the tenth- and eleventh-century princes of that name, but the wife assigned to him (Apraksia) was one of Batu's victims in 1237. In the Novgorod cycle, Vasiliĭ Buslaevič was, doubtless, the governor Vaska Buslaevič mentioned in the chronicle for 1171. The historical assurance is marred by the statement in the ballad that his father lived 900 years. The principal names mentioned in Russian 'byliny' are thus historic, but their adventures are wholly fantastical, and suit

<sup>1</sup> M. Braun, *Kosovo: die Schlacht auf dem Amselfelde*, Leipzig, 1937.

the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries far better than the tenth. The unreality of Vladimir's court offers a sharp contrast with the genealogical exactitude of the twelfth-century *Igor's Raid*. What we have are simply names and hints of character. These might be obtained from the epinicia (veličanija) which we know were improvised in old Russia after successful expeditions. Round these names wholly fabulous adventures were woven. The first event recorded, even indistinctly, is the battle of Kalka in 1224; but there are ballads which cause Ermak, the conqueror of Siberia (1582), to take part in that battle. An additional cause of confusion is that the entire Kiev cycle has been transferred to the Great Russian area, while in the Ukraine itself much more modern types of song prevail. In Great Russia we encounter a veritable historical ballad for the first time in *The Princes of Tver* (1327), and after that the series run on unbroken. In sum, the 'byliny' reach back to the thirteenth century in all probability, and some poem on Il'ja of Murom may have arisen in the twelfth, but a greater antiquity for the genre seems unlikely. Their apogee is marked by the cycles of Ivan the Terrible and Boris Godunov in the sixteenth century.

The historical ballads of central and western Europe give dates of a more decisive character, both because the events are better known, and because subsidiary information from monuments and chronicles is more abundant. The oldest ballad dates are provided by Denmark. The ballad of the *Battle of Lena* takes us to the year 1208; it is a straightforward report on the event, without romanesque accretions. There are older ballads which are not so free from retouching: *Erik Emun's Murder* (1137), *Sir Stig Hvide's* death (1151) and previous marriage, *Svend Grade* or the battle of Graahede (1157), *Tovelille* (Valdemar I's reign), *Esbern Snare* (Valdemars I and II): shortly after the thirteenth century opens there come the ballads of Queens Dagmar and Bengerd, the good queen and the bad, expressing the passions of the day. The evidence is overwhelming that 'viser' of the present type existed in 1200 and probably in 1150. On the other hand the history of Saxo Grammaticus, which draws heavily on poetical texts, uses no ballads. His information comes from late heroic poems in the Germanic metres, such as the *Bjarkamál*; his *Hagbard and Signe* is a much more circumstantial text than the ballads we now have. Saxo shows us, within living memory, a literary epoch when there were no ballads—assonating poems with refrains—but only the

older heroic alliterative poetry. He also provides evidence of changing fashions. 'Saxon poets' were in favour at court, and among their subjects were at least two that invite comparison with the ballads. One singer gave a warning to Knut Lavard in 1131, before the battle of Haraldsted, by chanting 'notissimam Grimildae erga fratres perfidiam', which is the subject of the Danish *Grimhild's Revenge*; and in 1157, before the battle of Graahede, another improvised an invective against King Svend on behalf of Valdemar Sejð: 'cantor Germanicus fugam Svenonis exiliumque cantilena complexus, varias et contumelias, formati in carmen conviciis, objectabat.' This is not the same treatment as found in the ballad of *Svend Grade*, but it is evidence showing that political subjects were being treated in a new manner, a manner which was coming in from the south. Knut Lavard is said to have preferred this style: 'Canutum Saxonici et ritus et nominis aman-tissimum scisset.' In the other Scandinavian countries the evidence as to age is less conclusive. The *Battle of Lena* concerns the Swedes and circulates among them, but the first exclusively Swedish ballad is *King Byrge and his Brothers*, referring to their murder in 1317 by the king. Norse themes include *King Haakon's Death* (1263) and *Lady Margaret*, the 'Maid of Norway', which is preserved in the Faeroe Islands after a lost Norse original. Thus Swedish and Norse balladry appears younger than the Danish, though of respectable antiquity. Faeroese and Icelandic ballads manifestly depend on those of the homelands.

Estimating the age of English and Scottish balladry is much more difficult. The south of England enjoyed a culture of the French sort among the upper classes, and as in France, the doubt constantly arises whether a given piece is genuinely in the traditional manner. Scottish ballads, which have often the closest associations with those of Norway and Denmark, may often have come from thence. *Binnorie* is a case in point. It is not possible to affirm, as the evidence runs, that our ballads are due to a previous Scandinavian impulse (they are strongest and truest in the Danelaw), or that they are older, or that they are independent. We cannot separate absolutely the English and Scottish contributions to the joint stock, nor yet treat them as entirely similar. The cardinal document as to the date of our ballads is a piece of external evidence.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, Copenhagen, 13: *Ravengaard og Memering*.

William of Malmesbury states definitely that a poem about Canute's daughter Gunhild, falsely accused before her husband the Emperor Henry III, and unexpectedly delivered, was 'nostris adhuc in triviis cantitata' (c. 1140). Brompton (c. 1350) names her accuser and defender, Roddyngar and Mimicon; Matthew of Westminster gives us Mimecan. There is no doubt that these references are to a poem of traditional nature and of content identical with the ballad of *Sir Aldingar*. The poem was either the ballad itself, or some very similar piece in another style which we gratuitously hypothetize. The early rise of the ballad is assured by its spread to Denmark and over the whole north. On the other hand, if we allow the existence of this definitely English ballad in the mid-twelfth century, we are not bound to go farther and associate its rise with the reign of Canute in the tenth. The narrative is probably unhistorical. It is an inversion of the Joseph and Zuleikha story, and had been fitted to St. Cunegunde and other women, the ordeal being by battle or by fire. In the precise form taken by the ballad, one notices that very many derivatives consider the credulous king to be a German emperor, and the names Gunhild, Roddingar, and Mimecan prevail over all the north. Elsewhere Mimecan gives place to some hero of the ballad-poet's own choosing, such as, in Catalonia, Count Ramón Berenguer IV. In Catalonia the injured lady is still stated to be Empress of Germany.

Apart from this ancient romance about an historical figure, the dates show a certain priority of English over Scottish ballads, though the Scottish ones have a more authentic ballad style. To the twelfth century, in theme, pertain *Queen Eleanor's Confession* and Robin Hood. The former ballad was rather literary in style; those on Robin Hood were gradually accumulated between his supposed date (1198) and the sixteenth century. The long *Geste* arose by the union of four ballads before 1400. The ideal date of *Sir Hugh or the Jew's Daughter* is 1255, but it is a pious legend and may have been committed to verse considerably later; *Judas* is also a pious piece, committed to writing in the thirteenth century. At the end of that century we find the Scottish *Sir Patrick Spens*, if it refers, as opinion generally concedes, to the death of the 'Maid of Norway' in 1290. The Norse ballad gives a quite different account of the same affair, since the poet was an adherent of the pretender Margaret, who was burnt at the stake a few years later. Some of

the earlier fourteenth-century pieces may be regarded as not wholly traditional work, but there is no question of the authenticity of *Cherry Chase* and *Otterburn* (1388, earliest versions composed about 1400), nor of the Aberdeenshire *Harlaw* (1411). There is a steady sequence of ballads from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in the traditional style on the Scottish side, but with more ostentatious minstrelsy on the English.

In Germany the attempt to attribute very high antiquity to ballad compositions encounters similar difficulties, and it is not until the fourteenth century that poems identifiable as ballads appear. The *Ludwigslied* (881) has been considered ballad-like. There are some phrases in it which have a heroic ring, like that of the traditional epos; but the sentiments are definitely clerical and the transmission is by manuscript. The old *Hildebrandslied* is an epic fragment, possibly composed as a fragment, but no more like a ballad than *Finnsburg* or *Waldere*. The ballad *Hildebrandslied* is different in style and content, and probably as late as the fourteenth century in date, if not later still. More relevant to ballad origins are the political poems in Latin composed by Saxon poets. With the Latin they mixed vernacular words, as in the *Ottolied* (941), and we have seen that they exercised their trade in Denmark in the twelfth century, enjoying royal favour. Though this kind of work was not traditional in style, it could readily take on a more popular manner. They also bridged the transition from alliterative to assonating verse. The authentic ring is first heard in *Lippold von Homboken* (1311) and the *Churls in Flanders* (1323-9), both in Low German territory. After the middle of the fourteenth century was passed the historical ballads come thickly upon us: the Swiss battles (*Sempach* 1386, *Näfels* 1388, *Birs* 1444, *Granson* 1476, *Murten* 1476, *Nancy* 1477, *Bruder Veit* 1515, leading on to the landsknecht ballads of *Pavia* 1525 and after), German feuds (*Busso von Erxleben* 1372), robber barons (*Epple von Geilinger* 1381, *Lindenschmid* 1490), and sea-rovers (*Stortebeker* 1402).

In the Romance area we find that Piedmontese and Provençal popular songs rely on a French technique which is so lyrical that it is hard to date. A revolution in musical taste towards the year 1500<sup>1</sup> led to the gradual abandonment of the more complex and emphatic styles, and corresponded to a simplification of the lyrical

<sup>1</sup> Th. Gérold, *Chansons populaires des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles avec leurs mélodies*, Strasbourg, n.d., p. vi.

style which operated from about the middle of the fifteenth century. With this encouragement men of letters and music took to recording songs which may have had a considerable previous life in tradition. The absence of historical pieces, save a small number, prevents our guessing how long that life may have been. The most striking piece is *The hanged Scholars* which goes back to an event at Pontoise in 1259. It is the source of the English ballad *The two Clerk's sons of Oxenford*, and of a Catalan ballad also. But such a date is exceptional, and we should have to allow that transmission of the necessary knowledge might have occurred otherwise than by way of traditional verse. Some French adventure pieces are necessarily anterior to the Spanish ones based on them, and other Spanish adventure poems imply lost French originals at least as old as the fifteenth century. What really causes the difficulty in estimating the age of French 'chansons populaires' is the extraordinarily rich and varied artistic life of medieval France, so markedly superior to all culture but that of the Italian city-states. Very few French pieces are untouched by artistic fashions, and on the other hand the greater part of French literature—'chansons de geste', 'chansons de toile', romances, legends—was familiar in one form or another to natives of other lands, and so exerted an influence on their ballads. We have to deal with the effects of *Ogier de Dinamarche* in Spain and Denmark, of *Tristan* in Spain, Iceland, and Germany, and of the courtly 'pastourelle' everywhere. On the other hand, one cannot say definitely that much of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century matter in Bartsch's *Romanzen und Pastourellen* is traditional in the narrower sense, or that any of it is irrelevant to the study of traditional poetry in France or abroad.

As for Italy, outside the Franco-Italian area we find a poetry based on the 'ottava' and so lyrical as not to admit of sure dates. Those who trace Sicilian folk-song back to the twelfth century rely on allusions to the Norman kings which any person who had access to the monuments at Palermo could have made. One needs a narrative of some complexity before one can hazard a date of composition. The oldest such piece in Sicily is the *Princess of Carini*, a story of the year 1565.

In the Spanish peninsula the priority of the Castilian ballads over all others is indubitable. Gil Vicente (d. 1536?) and Camões (d. 1580), in Portugal, quote their 'romances' in Castilian, showing that their entry into Portugal belongs to that century; the same

century doubtless witnessed the invasion of Catalonia by pieces different in style from the older Franco-Provençal popular songs. They are sometimes in Castilian only, but more often in a mixture of Castilian and Catalan. The Castilian historical 'romances', defined as above, take us back to the Civil Wars which established the House of Trastámara in the second half of the fourteenth century. One of them has preserved an ancient slander, like a fly in amber, and either two or three were used by the chancellor Pero López de Ayala in his chronicles before 1394.<sup>1</sup> The frontier ballads present a continuous sequence from the year 1407, and the oldest known adventure ballad can be encountered in a mixed Castilian and Catalan form about the year 1421.<sup>2</sup> The middle years of the fourteenth century are also the time indicated by a comparison of the traditional epics and the epical ballads.

In the Baltic regions it is possible to make out a case for the antiquity of Finnish ballads on the basis of one piece with a twelfth-century subject, and the use of mythological and magical motifs. I am unable to estimate the strength of such evidence, since an ecclesiastical legend does not always imply continuous popular verse traditions, and the use of pagan motifs depends on the duration of practising or virtual paganism among the Finnish country folk. In Lithuania the mythology may easily be quite modern. The songs are generally too lyrical to admit of dates, but there is one memory of the ravages and cruelties of the Teutonic Knights, which carries us back to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Soldiers' songs contain historical allusions from 1700 onwards. The practice of singing may, of course, be very much older than these dates, and the word 'daina' means merely 'song'; but 'dainos' of the present form and content seem unlikely to go farther back than the later Middle Ages. The form, I believe, is an import from Germany, with Lithuanian modifications.

Some of the ballad novelettes also indicate dates. *Tannhäuser* is not older than Tannhäuser himself; indeed, the motifs belong to the fifteenth century. *The noble Moringer* uses the name of the twelfth-century Heinrich von Morungen. The two pieces imply that the 'aubade' or 'Tageslied' had already descended from courtly

<sup>1</sup> See W. J. Entwistle, 'Romancero del Rey don Pedro', *Modern Language Review*, xxv, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> E. Levi, 'El romance florentino de Jaume de Olesa', *Revista de Filología Española*, xiv, 1927.



literature to traditional ballads. The Rumanian *Monastery of Argeş* uses a name for the master-builder which belongs to a Greek engineer of the seventeenth century. The *Castle in Austria* is of fifteenth-century date in its original home, and so must be younger elsewhere. Many other cases of the kind could be cited, but these should suffice.

To sum up, the evidence of the historical ballads everywhere indicates that ballad-poetry as we know it had a definite date of commencement; before that date there were songs and epics and other sorts of literature, but not our ballads. In France this date cannot be conveniently given because of the special situation of medieval French literature. In Spain the mid-fourteenth century is indicated. In Denmark it is the mid-twelfth century, in England either then or later, in Germany the early fourteenth century, in Czechoslovakia the seventeenth or sixteenth, in Lithuania the fifteenth. In the east there is a marked priority of the Anatolian cycles which may go back towards the tenth century. Serbian ballads arise in the later fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries, and Bulgarian and Rumanian later. Russian 'byliny' can hardly be older, in any form recognizable as the modern, than the early thirteenth century; the fourteenth is a more likely date for the older pieces. Comparison with the traditional epics, when directly or indirectly available, shows that there was in each country a time when ballads were not. The diffusion of certain important ballads also follows a course laid across comparatively recent centuries. Ballad literature arises at definite dates, and sets, as we have seen, when the practice of entertainment through reading becomes general among the better classes. This spread has occurred at different times, according as the country is one of the progressive group or not, but the whole span of time between the rise and decline of the genre can reasonably be called medieval in each land.

Isolated motifs may be 'timeless, nameless'. For single ballads it may not be possible to give a date; but they are always dated in general terms by the limits assigned to the genre in any country, and they are usually to be dated more closely by comparison with others of the same class and characteristics. In the second half of the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth, almost all the peoples of Europe were able to enjoy the finest pieces of their repertoires.

## VI

### HOW BALLADS SPREAD

THE traditional style employs only the most general situations and the most spontaneous motifs. Its products must be accepted by all men as part of their own imaginative experience, and if the original poem has not achieved this universality, the subsequent variations by innumerable singers will pare away what is unusual. When thoroughly integrated into popular tradition the ballad will be oecumenical in style and contents: 'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus'. This universality has led to the belief that ballads are the spontaneous creations of the peoples: they are the *Stimmen der Völker*, as Herder's editor put it. There are theories of the rise of ballads so mystical that they cannot be pursued by me; theories which dispense with personal authorship, and envisage some undefined sort of spontaneous generation among the folk. Andrew Lang, without denying the fact of personal authorship, denies its relevance to the criticism of a manner and motifs which are universal.<sup>1</sup>

No one any longer (he wrote) attributes them to this or that author or to this or that date. The attempt to find date or author for a genuine popular song is as futile as a similar search in the case of a Märchen. It is to be asked, then, whether what is confessedly true of folk-tales—of such stories as the *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*—is true also of folk-songs. Are they, or have they been, as universally sung as the fairy-tales have been narrated? Do they, too, bear traces of the survival of primitive creeds and primitive forms of consciousness and of imagination? Are they, like Märchen, for the most part, little influenced by the higher religions, Christian or polytheistic? Do they turn, as the Märchen do, on the same incidents, repeat the same stories, employ the same machinery of talking birds and beasts? Lastly, are any specimens of ballad literature capable of being traced back to extreme antiquity? It appears that all these questions may be answered in the affirmative; that the great age and universal diffusion of the ballad may be proved; and that its birth, from the lips and heart of the people, may be contrasted with the origin of an artistic poetry in the demand of an aristocracy for a separate epic literature destined to be its own possession, and to be the first development of a poetry of personality—a record of *individual* passions and emotions. After bringing forward examples of

<sup>1</sup> A. Lang, 'Ballads', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition.

the identity of features in European ballad poetry, we shall proceed to show that the earlier genre of ballads with refrain sprang from the same primitive custom of dance, accompanied by improvised song, which still exists in Greece and Russia, and even in the valleys of the Pyrenees.

The questions might all be answered in the affirmative (though Perrault's *Cinderella* is perhaps not the happiest instance of timelessness), and not lead to the conclusion Lang announced. The answers would refer to the isolated features of ballad poetry and traditional literature, features which are to be found also in the epical works he deemed aristocratic and personal; but the ballads are not isolated features, but complexes of a definite type. It is at this point we must remember that the ballad, for the duration of this book, is a narrative song. Pure lyrics do not offer us a web of circumstance such that we can recognize repetitions of the same pattern without great difficulty. Their motifs are universal and simple, and they are presented without elaboration. There is still no reason to deny that each such song arose at a particular date under the hand of a particular author; the fact that we do not know either date or author does not imply that neither existed. Indeed, the lyrics may be, though we do not know it, quite young; everlasting reincarnations of the same simple notions. From the pure lyric it is not possible to draw conclusions; but the narrative ballad is quite different. We have already noticed that there exists a vast mass of testimony as to the date of the genre in different European countries, and the periods within which some particular pieces have arisen. It is because these narratives are complexes of motifs that this dating is possible; the motifs may be universal, but the union established between them is temporal and distinctive. The form also is generally defined with precision; one cannot mistake the form of a 'romance', 'vise', 'junačka pesma', or 'bylina'. This form has its historical relation to other forms before and after, and itself implies a chronology, though we may not know it. The grouping of the motifs is too close to be explained by fortuitous coincidence, and not infrequently gives some indication of the circumstances attending on the original composition or the course of migration.

Within any given area there is never a doubt but that two ballads of identical content are forms of the same ballad, and not separate spontaneous creations. The *Three Ravens* and the *Two Corbies* are forms of the same ballad tradition, though the one be English and

the other Scottish; the same is true of the English *Sir Aldingar* and the Scottish *Sir Hugh le Blond*. A short and undoubtedly incomplete list shows me 181 'viser' which occur in more than one of the Scandinavian countries; the total number of 'viser' is about 600. In the German area it is not feasible to mark off the ballads of High Germany from Low Germany, or to separate the Flemish and Dutch ballads from the main body, or the Swiss from the rest. All that one can do is to recognize that certain pieces bear the marks of Flemish, German, or Swiss origin, and that others have continued to be sung within a narrow area. The unity of Serbian and Bulgarian ballads is attested by more than a score of Bulgarian pieces on the Serbian hero Marko Kraljević, not to mention other coincidental ballads. The same is true of international relations in Franco-Italian balladry; it is the same ballad of François I's imprisonment that circulates in France and Piedmont. The French *Porcheronne*, Provençal *Porcheireto*, and Catalan *Noble Porquera* are merely variants of the same thing. Portuguese and Castilian ballads are found to agree, and Castilian and Catalan. Wherever there is no difficult frontier of language or culture to surmount, traditional ballads are able to travel from mouth to mouth without impediment. The dialect used for their performance takes on slowly new characteristics as the song passes over the ground, until it may reach the limits of the linguistic area. It is not translation but substitution that occurs. The substitution may be left incomplete when the original is sufficiently understood. One may see this state of language in the Castilian-Catalan ballads, or in the Faeroese *Nykkurs vísa*, several verses of which are in the original Danish. Borrowing, not spontaneous creation, in such cases is the rule.

The words of ballads are, in fact, complexes of motifs just as their tunes are complexes of notes. The chances against fortuitous coincidence in the words are scarcely less heavy than against fortuitous coincidence in melody. These two aspects of the full performance have each their history of rise, expansion, and decline.

*Tannhäuser* is a ballad of which the history is singularly easy to trace, thanks to its literary connexions. The minnesinger so called lived from about 1200 to 1268 and was a contemporary, as the ballad asserts, of Pope Urban IV (1261-4). The connexion with the Venusberg or Sibyl's Paradise must have been made in the fifteenth century, since we first hear of the Paradise from Antoine

de la Salle about 1420. An apocryphal poem detailing a conversation between the poet and Venus has served to cement this association; the poem is recorded in a manuscript of the year 1453. Therefore, we can affirm that the ballad was made by a High German in the fifteenth century, and (since the opening is in the style of an 'aubade') one who was familiar with the processes of the courtly lyric. There is external evidence of its passage into Low German territory in the eighties of that century. *Danhuser* leads to the Flemish *Herr Daniel* on the one hand, and to the *Danyser* which appears in Denmark in 1684. The reasons for believing *The Castle in Austria* to be a fifteenth-century piece are of a more general nature, but equally satisfying. It is one of many ballads on the theme of the guiltless prisoner, who has set his love too high and must suffer for it, and it goes back to a common source, in all probability, in which the prisoner was a poor student of the University of Paris. However, it represents a new start and has a history of its own. The ballad is easily recognizable by its first lines:

There lies a castle in Austria  
that is so nobly founded,  
with silver and the red, red gold  
and marble stone surrounded.

The verse is recognizable even when, for devout reasons, the Eastern realm (Oosterrijk) is allegorically understood. Starting in High Germany the ballad descends to Low Germany and spreads westwards into the Netherlands and northwards into Denmark and Sweden. The oldest German tune belongs to the year 1480 and is unconnected with the rest (4D412). What is called the 'old wise' is a tune recorded from the middle years of the sixteenth century, first in the Low Countries. In 1540 its intervals are 73G, but there are many variations, and from Rostock Erk and Böhme reported one in B212C which is virtually that of the Danish ballad (B25BC).<sup>1</sup> The ballad entered Denmark from the Low German territory, possibly from Mecklenburg; the date must lie between

<sup>1</sup> *Souterliedekens*, 1540.

73G  
1 flat U4  
d:dda.a:c.cf.r  
g:ab.aa:ga.r  
b:cbagb:a.ad.r  
a:gdfg:eed.r

Rostock  
B212C  
1 flat 32 U4  
a./a..ag./a..ab./c...c./a...  
c./c...cc./a..gf./g...../a.

Danish  
B25BC  
2 flats 68 U4  
a/a(.a)ga.d/d.ca(.a)  
c/b.ag.f/ga...  
d/d.ca.b/a.gê(.f)  
a/c.ba(.g)f/ed...

the first appearance of this tune in 1540 and the printed Danish ballad of 1697, and probably nearer to this later date since Syv did not admit the piece into his collection (1695). The Swedish ballad also uses a melody current in the Low Countries and north Germany.

There are a number of other pieces which could be cited as illustrating the spread of German themes into Scandinavian balladry; the *Count harnessed to the Plough*, the *Heathen Princess* (or *Sultan's Daughter*) are among the more obvious. Similar expansion into Slavic territory can be studied in *The Shroud* (German *Der Vorwirt*), which is found in Lusatia and Czechoslovakia also. It is a macabre ballad: a dead husband rises from his grave to reproach his widow for her lightheartedness. The Slavic ballads have been collected only in the nineteenth century, and so it is scarcely possible to give a date for the borrowing; but the fact is confirmed by the resemblance of some of the tunes. The basis seems to be a formula 22BB. *Der Vorwirt* has 5221ABB, with a different initial interval and an inserted 1A; the Czech *Rubaš* has 4BBA, 4BB21, and D22BBAB as three of its five tunes; and the Lusatian *Křitel* has 43E2BB, in which 43E is equivalent to 2. There has been considerable modification, but the resemblance still dimly appears, and a full transcription would show that some parts of the melodies are still fairly close.

These are cases in which ballads have crossed a frontier, constituted in Denmark rather by ballad tradition than by language, and in the Slavic countries by language rather than tradition. In their commerce with Scotland and England the Scandinavian ballads have had to cross the sea, though they are welcomed on arrival as pieces in our own manner. We do not dispose of studies so adequate in this respect as those which have been available for us in establishing Germany's relations with her neighbours. The texts declare their intimate relationship, but have been much changed, and the melodies are hard to identify. *Ribbolt and Guldberg* is a good example. It is essentially a story of taboo. By naming Ribbolt's name, Guldberg leads to his death in battle against her seven brothers. The plot is encountered in the Eddic *Helgakviða II*, and the superiority of the Danish version justifies the belief that the 'vise' arose in Denmark. It has covered all the North: Swedish *Hillebrand* or *Redevold*, Norse *Rikeball* and *Veneros*, Icelandic *Ribbalds kvæði*. In Scotland it is called *Earl Brand* (doubtless a

variant of Hildebrand) and *The Douglas Tragedy*, and it is living in the Appalachians under the titles *The Seven Sleepers*, *The Seven Brothers*, or *Sweet William*. In a previous chapter some mention has been made of the likeness and unlikeness of the tunes. *The Two Sisters*, *Edward*, *Clerk Saunders*, and *Hind Etin* are other examples of ballads essentially the same in their Scottish or Scandinavian forms. *Edward* is probably Scottish in origin. It is sung in the Appalachians to two tunes of the same class. The words have travelled from Sweden to Finland, but the Swedish and Finnish melodies are different.

In order not to extend this discussion too much, it may suffice to say that the same kind of migrations occur elsewhere. It is not motifs that travel, but ballads as units, often accompanied by their tunes; and so long as the movement is limited and recent, the evidence of identity is incontestable. *The Lament of the Robber's Bride* is the same thing in the Balkans, the Ukraine, and Czechoslovakia; the Rumanian *Marcu and the Turk* is a translation of a Serbian or Bulgarian original; *Roman and Olesa* is found in Poland (or at least, Polish Galicia) and the Ukraine; the *Murderous Wife* is sung in Czechoslovakia and Poland. The gipsies of southern Hungary sing ballads of German and Greek origin among others inspired by the conditions of their own life. *Anrus and Death* is their variant of the Greek *Digenis and Charon*. There is movement of ballad literature all over Europe, just like the movement of books. The transmission is from mouth to mouth and not hand to hand. The linguistic obstacle is overcome by the shading of dialects into each other, thus effecting a gradual change of language; and as against ignorance and want of curiosity about the productions of other people, oral transmission finds compensation in the sameness of the ballad style.

The movements which we have considered hitherto have been of a simple and restricted sort, but there are others of ampler range which have constituted a veritable commonwealth of ballads. These great international cycles are, of course, much more subject to variation than those of narrower orbit; it is much more difficult to locate their centres; yet the principle is the same; the ballad rises at some definite place and time and follows definite routes in its expansion over Europe. By considering such pieces we get some impression of the energy of invention which has been shown by the greater ballad peoples. A map of Europe could be drawn to

show the migration of ballads, and it would be criss-crossed by lines in every direction; but there would be some emphatic foci: France, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Serbia. Peripheral nations export less than those at the centre of the Continent, but even at the centre there are peoples who more often borrow than lend.

Owing to the nature of its 'romancero' Spain has comparatively little to put into the common stock. The predominantly historical trend, admirable as it is as an education for the national conscience, is not suited to carry the ballads beyond the limits within which this sort of historical information is interesting. The Spanish 'romances', therefore, circulate among peoples of Hispanic stock and language. An exceptional case is provided by the ballad of *Guarinos*, in the Carolingian series, which chanced to begin:

An evil fate befell you, Frenchmen,  
at the Chase of Roncevaux;  
Charlemagne there lost his honour,  
died the dozen Peers also.

The ballad was translated by Karamzin into Russian in 1789, and in 1834 Baron Erdman encountered it as far afield as Siberia. It has the honour of being the first literary ballad in the Russian tongue.

Catalonia, Provence, France, and north Italy form one area with a common store of 'chansons populaires', and it is not easy to assign a particular piece to one division rather than to another. *The Samaritan Woman* has been reckoned to the credit of Catalonia in particular. The woman of Samaria became confused with the Magdalene, and her meeting with Christ led to her repentance, and works of penitence. Passing through France as *The Penance of the Magdalene*, the omission of the proper identifications led to the English *Maid and Palmer*, which has no obvious biblical connexion. A ballad on the Magdalene is found in Denmark and Sweden also. Crossing Germany the ballad tended to paint the sinner's life in ever blacker colours; she was guilty not merely of carnal sins, but of wholesale infanticide to hide her guilt. This is the legend as it appears in *Aria the infanticide* in Lusatia, the *Sinner (Hřišnice)* in Czechoslovakia, and in Poland. The unpardonable sinner is swallowed by the floor of the church, unshriven. From Provence spreads the ballad called *La Escriveta*. The story is older, since it has been plausibly connected with the epic of Walther of Aquitaine, who escaped with his bride from



Attila's capital. The pattern was used for later verse-novels, and must have adopted a form in which the hero's name was given as Gaiffier. This stage of the tradition is represented by the Castilian 'Carolingian' ballads of *Gaiferos*, 'who quite forgot his lady free', and the escape of *Moriana* or *Julianesa* from a Moorish palace. A more anonymous form is the Provençal *Escriveta*, which extended into northern France and Italy (*Il Moro saracino*).

France has supplied to balladry a great deal more than individual themes. The 'belle maumariée' and 'bergère', the 'aubade' and the songs of artisans and soldiers, are French patterns which have been used elsewhere to cover more or less original extemporizations; and the influence of French 'chansons de geste' extends from Portugal to Sweden. The narrative which Thackeray has popularized as *Little Billee* seems to spring from the seafaring population of Brittany and Normandy. There is a Breton ballad, *The Sailors*, on this theme. Extending to the south-west, it becomes the *Cabin-boy* of Provence and Catalonia (*Lou Moussi*, *El Grumete*, also *La Tortolita*), and then the *Nau Catarineta* of Portugal. The name is that of a famous vessel which served, among other things, to carry Princess Beatrice to Savoy in 1519. To the north-east the ballad spread among maritime folk to become the *Seafarers* of Denmark, *Sir Peter's Voyage* in Sweden, and the *Merchant's Tale* in Iceland. The theme is one to attract attention among seamen and travellers, and is in fact confined to the seaboard of western Europe. There is no such limitation on another theme which I think should be assigned to France, namely, *The Warrior Maiden*. This maiden has been known in China also, where it is said that a certain Mu-lan performed her father's military duties as an example of filial piety. Whether that has any connexion with the European ballad, it is not needful to inquire in a book restricted to European balladry. In Europe the story has a definite nucleus which persists in all its varieties, and there is in most of them a tendency to stress the aspect of sex, which is characteristically French. The point is not merely that a girl should be a distinguished soldier, but that her unmasculine beauty should arouse some youth to set her traps which she skilfully evades. I should like also to think that the situation owes something to the exploits of Joan of Arc; there seems no reason to consider the ballad older than the fifteenth century. If it did not arise in France, the lines of migration suggest northern Italy as its home. The Portuguese *Dom Martinhos*,

Castilian *Marquitos*, and Catalan *Joven Guerrera* imply a French original, extant in the sixteenth century. In the Messin Puymaigre encountered *La brave Claudine*. In Italy the ballad appears as *La Guerriera*, and crossing the Adriatic on Venetian vessels it reached Dalmatia and Serbia as *Zlatija*. The tests of her sex became at the same time of a more improbable sort, though they continued to include the essential test of stripping to bathe. Breaking down into a popular tale, the story became the *Silvertooth* of the Albanians, the *Basilopoula* of the Epirot Greeks (who contaminated with it the folk-tale of the wife who would not speak), and at last reached Wallachia (*Mizil Crai*). From France or Italy the ballad reached Czechoslovakia in the Czech *Bojovnice*, where the second half was lost. There is a White Russian ballad verbally connected with the Czech, and at last this line comes to a stop in the *Děvuška-voin* of the Ukraine. In this last shape there is a new complication, taken from another ballad, since the girl is advised not to fight in front of or behind the main battle, and her neglect of good advice involves her in further trials.

*Donna Lombarda* is the most famous of north Italian ballads. The story how Rosmunda poisoned her faithless paramour Hel-michis is as old as the *Historia Langobardorum* of Paul the Deacon. This history was one of the most popular in the Middle Ages; there is no need to ascribe very great antiquity to the ballad itself. Its simple structure, however, shows that it is in the first flight of the 'canti popolari', and this is naturally confirmed by the music. In France the poem has the same form and content, but in Spain and Portugal the anti-heroine's name has been forgotten and replaced by Moriana, Julianesa, or Ausenia. *Moriana* is one of the few 'romances' for which we have an older form than the one in tirades; it exists also as a lyric, and that brings it closer to the Franco-Italian style. In the other direction, towards the east, this tale spread and was generalized to cover a variety of poisonings. A convenient title is the German *Schlangeköchin*, since, apart from the tense dialogue proper to the whole group, these derivative pieces generally describe a menu of fish and snakes, or eels. They vary according as the lady friend be the poisoner, or the suitor's or the fiancée's mother, or a sister wishing to get her own way. Thus we have the different varieties of the German *Schlangeköchin*, the Danish *Poisoning* (*Giftblanding*), the Czech *Fiancée as poisoner* and *Sister as poisoner*, the Lusatian *Hindrašk* and *Evil*

*Mother*, Hungarian Gipsy *Wicked Mother-in-law*, Serbian *Stojan and his Mother*, Russian *Two Lovers*, English *Lord Randal*, and Italian *Poisoned man's will* (*Testamento dell' Avvelenato*). This last is the more curious since, though the cycle is indigenous to Italy, this piece has come from England. It has the form of *Lord Randal*, and its tune is a variant.<sup>1</sup>

It seems also advisable to associate with Italy the motif of soporific drugs and feigned death. The most interesting of such stories is that of the girl who simulated death to escape a ravisher or unwelcome lover. It exists in France, Italy, and Catalonia. In Yugoslavia it is entitled *Erceg Stepan* (the name shows connexion with the seaboard which was under Venetian influence). A notable feature of this ballad is the severity of the tests to which the pretended corpse is put; they belong more suitably to the haiduk ballad of *Little Radoica* who, as a hero, is more fitted to stand the trials of a snake in the bosom and nails driven into the quick, though not of dancing-girls. *Erceg Stepan* is represented as a Moslem creditor. In the Czech form the ballad is entitled *The Turk's Bride*. Boccaccio's use of the Imogen theme is probably older than any of the ballads of the cycle of *Marianson*, which may be either French or Italian. The ingenuity behind the story is rather Italian than French. In France it is called *Marianson* or *Innocence proved*, in north Italy *The Rings*. It does not appear in the Spanish peninsula. In Scotland it is *Reedisdale and Wise William* and *The Twa Knights*; and in the latter form it presents the oddity of agreeing better with the Greek ballad of *Maurianos and his Sister* than with its neighbours. (The point is that the girl keeps her honour by sacrificing that of her handmaiden.) The Rumanian form is called *Iancea Sabiencea*. An unwelcome note of ferocity is present in the Serbian *Marko Kraljević and the Royal*

<sup>1</sup> See Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, *The Study of Folk Songs* (Everyman's Library), London, n.d., pp. 171-80. There is a tune to *King Henry* (Child 12) which closely resembles one gathered in Lombardy by Cocchiara:

*King Henry* (521ABE4BB)

2 flats 68 U8

dga(b..a)g/gdfë.d/

dga(b..a)g/gddg.

(bc)/(dd)edca(ab)/baga.

(dd)/dga(b..a)b/dgfg.. /

*L'Avvelenato* (521A)

2 flats 68 U8

d/g.gg.a/ba gg.a/bagbag/a.r

c/d.aa.b/b.... /b.ar (1st hemistich repeated)

d/g.gg.a/ba gg.a/bagbag/a.r

d/e.aabc/c..b (3rd hemistich repeated)

a/g.gb.a/g.r (refrain)

The chief difference is in the arrangement of the lines, in which the Italian version stands closer to what is usual in the *Lord Randal* series. There is also a *Donna Lombarda* melody used in Romagna with the melodic contour 521C.

*Delibasha*, since it is not rings that are stolen as a proof of inconstancy, but a hand cut off. In Russia Aljoša Popovič is credited with an adventure of this sort, and the opening tableau—where a young husband unwisely boasts of his wife—is found also in the ballad of *Stavr*.

A famous diver in the reign of Emperor Frederic II, Nicholas by name, lost his life under circumstances that have been preserved by ballad traditions of a much later date. Their immediate source is literary, but the ballad of *Cola Pesce* has enjoyed popularity in a number of countries, since it lends itself to adaptation. The essence is that some one is dared to dive or swim, and usually drowns. Most ballads make this a test of the lover. It is known in Brittany and France and in all Italy. The Greek *Diver* and half a dozen Lithuanian ballads correspond to this theme, the latter having the German *Wager* for a go-between. In Serbia there is a ballad of a girl who will choose the man that dares to swim twice over a dangerous river, and the Rumanians tell the same story of a certain Rada, beside the Pruth. But perhaps these pieces are too distantly related to be ascribed to the one cycle.

The most notable English ballad to have spread to other lands is *Sir Aldingar*, which has already been mentioned. It is difficult to know whether some pieces in our repertoire are of island or continental origin, not to mention the always obscure speculation as to the influence the Celtic peoples of the fringe may have exercised on the Northmen's imagination. The elfin music of our balladry is especially poignant, and if the same note sounds in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway we may have some part in that. Our islands stand on the circumference of Europe, and so do not export themes so readily as the central nations. Merit is no more the sole condition of fame in oral than in written literature, but other considerations, material and fortuitous, intervene. The case is demonstrated by such pieces as *Tam Lin* and *Sir Patrick Spens*, which are unsurpassed in power and beauty throughout all Europe, but have remained solely our own. Our kinsfolk in Denmark, whatever they may owe to us or have given us, undoubtedly occupy a central position in Scandinavian balladry. *Elveskud* is Danish; at least as a ballad. The youthful bridegroom is compelled to enter into a fairy dance and is blighted; he returns home to die; his death is concealed from his bride (sometimes because of her condition), but she hears the tolling bells, learns the truth, and dies for

sorrow. The ballad is the English *Clerk Colvill* and the Swedish *Sir Olof in the Elves' Dance*, Icelandic *Olaf Lily-rose* and Faeroese *Olavur Knightly-rose*. The German equivalent in traditional literature is *The Knight of Strauffenberg*; the Danish poem is made perfect in Goethe's *Erlkönig*. There are several Lusatian ballads of *The Luckless Wedding*, which is also found in Czechoslovakia. The extension south-westward was probably by sea, since we encounter a well-preserved form of the ballad in Brittany (*Count Nann*). In France the elfin opening has been lost; *Le Roi Renaud* appears with a mysterious mortal wound. A subcentre was thus created in France whence we have the Basque *King John*, Catalan *Widow* and *Don Ramon*, Spanish and Portuguese *Don Pedro*, in a south-westerly direction; and *Count Anzolin* or the *Concealed Demise* in Italy, leading to the Rhodian Greek *Constantine or Marriage and Departure*. It has been claimed that the head of the ballad has been preserved in the Spanish and Catalan *Gentle Lady and Rustic Shepherd*, but the claim seems too ingenious.<sup>1</sup>

Scandinavian scholars are wont to disclaim for their region the ballad of the *Merman's Bride* (*Agnes and the Merman*). It is found on the shores of the North Sea, among the Low Germans, and in Lusatia; but there seems little reason to accept a further disclaimer by German critics, who would assign the ballad to the Slavs. Water-sprites among the Slavs are different from the northern mermen and nixes; and they play a more prominent part in Scandinavian than in German tradition. Assuming, despite the authorities, a Danish centre of diffusion, we can run rays out to the north (Faeroese *Nykkurs vísa*, Icelandic *Elenar ljóð*), to the west (French *Belle Hélène*, Breton *Fiancée*), and to the south (German *Wassermanns Braut*, Lusatian *Wodný muž*, Hungarian *Pabeli Antal*). Revenants are a notable feature of northern mythology, and there are two powerful Danish ballads which use this motif: namely, *The Mother beneath the Mould* and *Aage and Elsa*. The former is a medieval equivalent of the Eddic *Waking of Angantyr* and *Svipdagsmál*. The *Svipdagsmál* has direct descendants in Scandinavian balladry, and the connexion between these and *The Mother beneath the Mould* is generic, not direct. The tears of orphans waken the

<sup>1</sup> This is the appropriate place to mention the model of all comparative ballad studies, S. Grundtvig's classic *Elveskud*, dansk, svensk, norsk, færøsk, islandsk, skotsk, vendisk, bœmisk, tysk, fransk, italiensk, catalonsk, spansk, bretonsk Folkeviser, Copenhagen, 1881. *Elveskud* is No. 47 in his *Danske gamle Folkeviser*.

dead mother from her rest; she rises and terrifies her husband and his new wife Silverlin. The ballad often takes her name, or her title of stepmother; under those styles we encounter it in Sweden, the Faeroes, and Iceland. It is found in Italy (*La Madre risuscitata*) and in Provence (*The Orphans*). In Germany the conclusion has been shed, doubtless for good theological reasons: the mother cannot rise. We are concerned chiefly with the bitter tears of the orphans, as also in Czechoslovakia and Lusatia. Orphans and their woes occupy a considerable portion of the folk-songs of Lithuania and Latvia, which are chiefly inspired by domestic joys and sorrows, of which the bereaved state is typical. There are several pieces which suggest that Laime, the goddess of luck, is especially kind to orphans. The lack of narrative elements makes comparison very slippery, but one of Rhesa's pieces, though extremely simple, does indicate the tableau of the orphan girl weeping at her mother's grave.

Two ballads of literary origin, the one classical, the other biblical, have been referred to the Netherlands: *The Two King's Children* and *Hallewijn*. The former is the legend of Hero and Leander, but so simplified that the classical link has snapped. From Flanders it passed into France (*Flambeau d'Amour*) and northern Italy. In Germany it divided into two types: the one is narrative (*Zwei Königskinder*), and spreads to the Czechs, Magyars, Wends, and Poles; the other is lyrical (*Zwei Wasser*), and is of exceptional charm. As for *Hallewijn* it is only in the Netherlandish version that the heroine returns bearing the head of her would-be seducer. The detail establishes firmly the connexion between this ballad and the story of Judith and Holofernes. The Jews of Bethulia have been forgotten, however. If the heroine goes out, it is because she has been beguiled by the suitor Hallewijn or enchanted by his music; and Hallewijn's crimes are all personal, since he has killed many a bride. As the ballad pursues its career in Germany we are presented with alternative solutions: the heroine may be murdered and avenged by her brothers, or she may escape by quick thinking, making a pretext to borrow a knife wherewith to stab Hallewijn. The latter's name becomes Ulinger, Ulrich, Gert Olbert, &c., travelling always farther from the biblical Holofernes. *Molnár Anna* is a Magyar derivative of the German versions. In Scandinavia the ballad made contact with others which describe elfin malevolence, and so it appears in English in *Lady Isabel and the*

*False Knight* and *May Collin*. The French have *Renaud wife-killer*, perhaps from an English intermediary; and so we reach the Italian *Monferrina* and the Spanish and Portuguese *Rico Franco*.

The spread of German ballads in the immediately adjacent lands has been very vigorous. As examples of wider influence one may consider those of the *Südeli* and *Moringer* cycles. The former depends on the medieval epic of *Kudrûn*, and has taken several forms. The gist of the matter is that a brother discovers his long-lost sister washing by the shore or otherwise ignobly employed (in later forms she is a servant in an inn); generally he has made insulting remarks to her while still not recognizing her, and the ballads are sometimes spiced with the motif of incest narrowly avoided. The Lusatian and Czech versions are of a late type. In France there is the same theme, or a similar one, in the *Hapless Bride avenged by her Brothers*, which appears as the *Sister avenged* in Italy, and *Clotildo* in Provence. The name Clothilde does not occur in the ballad, but was given by Arbaud to his version by way of allusion to the daughter of Clovis, unhappily married to Amalaric the Visigoth. In Spain the tale is told under the rubric *Don Bueso*. The epic *Kudrûn* rests probably on an older epic *Hilde*, which belongs to the maritime peoples of the north. The Danish *Mermaid* may be a relic of the older poem.

*The Noble Moringer or the Crusader's Return* uses a plot as old as the *Odyssey*. The details, however, are gathered into a well-knit tale which can usually be recognized at sight. Immediately after his wedding a nobleman leaves his wife, appointing a period of years (usually seven) for his return. She is free to marry after they have elapsed, but she usually waits still longer, and is often constrained to a new match against her will. Then the lord returns in disguise, makes his way to the banquet, and attracts her attention by dropping a ring into the loving-cup. The new match is broken off at once; the new bridegroom being treated with considerable harshness by most popular poets. The motif is universal, but the plot is particular. One encounters it first in Germany about the year 1200 in Caesarius of Heisterbach. The name of the minnesinger, Heinrich von Morungen (of the twelfth century), is attached by the unknown minstrel who modelled the opening of his poem on the convention of the 'aubade'. In a later form the hero was stated to be *Henry the Lion of Brunswick*, whence the Bruncvík of Czech historical legends. In England the name is also changed, it has

become *Hind Horn*; in Spain *Count Dirlos* is a ballad with an elaborate Carolingian setting, and a later Portuguese adaptation was the legend of *Frei Luis de Sousa*. The tale appears in Denmark as *Finnekonster*, a debased form, and in Russia in the fine 'bylina' of *Dobrynja and Aljoša Popovič*. There is a simplified Czech ballad entitled *First Love*, and the poem has flourished in the Balkans also (Serbian *Pomorovac Todor* and *Ĵanković Stojan's Imprisonment*, Greek *Constantine the Little*, Rumanian *Moşneagul*).<sup>1</sup> In all these instances we are dealing with poems which reproduce most of the essential details of the Moringer legend, though with changes of name. There exist other poems, such as the French and German *Soldier's Return*, the Polish *Return by Night*, the Piedmontese *Soldier's Return*, and Sicilian *Return of the Prisoner*, which may or may not be associated with the cycle. They shade off into a number of other returns: the soldier or wanderer may not only find his wife about to remarry, but actually remarried; or it may be a fiancée who has died, or who has married some one else. Doubtless many of these simple pieces have been spontaneously invented, but others show connecting links.

The consideration of the Danish *Aage and Elsa* has been postponed in order to take it along with the Greek legend of *Constantine and Arete*. In either case there is a revenant. But Aage is a dead lover roused by the bitter tears of his fiancée to take her with him to the grave; Constantine is a dead brother who is forced by his mother's curse to fetch his sister home from a far country. She dies, of course, after so terrific an experience; but that does not seem sufficient reason to identify the two traditions. The power of tears to disturb the dead is one motif; the might of a mother's curse is quite different. *Aage and Elsa* is a more powerful piece in Danish than in the otherwise admirable *Sweet William's Ghost*. The German ballads of the cycle are feeble, but they (with the English poem) lead up to Bürger's *Lenore* and the full flowering of the ballad-cult. The Czechs and Hungarian gipsies have ballads depending on the German. On the other hand, *Constantine and Arete* is an equally vigorous creation of the Greeks. Its origin seems to have been in Asia Minor, for it belongs to the older strata of Hellenic balladry. In Macedonia it discovered a focus for radiation into Rumania (*Voichiță*), Bulgaria (*Lazar and Petkana*), Serbia (*Ĵovo and his Sister*), and Albania (*Constantine, the Dead*

<sup>1</sup> See Note C, at the end of the book.



*Voyager*). In some way not yet explained, the theme detached itself from Greece and became the English *Suffolk Miracle*, a ballad which tramples an impressive subject under a pedestrian style.

The Greeks of Asia also brought into being and began to circulate the 'tragoudi' of *The Bridge of Adana*, later identified with Arta. It is a masons' ballad; to keep a bridge or building firm, the mason's wife had to be buried in the foundations. The focus for diffusion was again Macedonia, where all the languages meet in a multilingual region, but the course was not quite the same. The master-mason was identified with Manuel, a Greek engineer whose name appears on a bridge of the seventeenth century. By way of suspense, we are now told that the victim is to be selected by the chance that she will be the first to arrive. There is a Bulgarian fragment, *Mano maïstore*, which tells in lyric decasyllables that Manuel built a tower and ascended to the top; but fell from there through being dazzled by the glitter of widow Gjurgja's daughter's ornaments. This may be independent of the other tradition, and even a direct expression of peasant suspicion of the clever craftsman Manuel; but it seems to be the source of the curious ending of the Rumanian *Mesterul Manole*. According to this poem the architects are puffed up with pride at their work, ascend to the top and think they can fly; so they are dashed to pieces and perish. For the rest, the Rumanian ballad of the building of Curtea din Argeş is the finest of them all in the use it makes of helpless suspense; no prayers of the master nor miracle of God suffice to deter the faithful lady from coming to her doom. The Serbian *Founding of Scutari (Skadar)* uses the datum in a new way. Three brothers—Vukašin, Uglješ, and Gojko—agree to sacrifice the first comer, but two send secret messages home to their wives; this is how the Albanians tell their legend of the *Bridge of Dibra*. Professor Starkie found a Gipsy family singing the Greek ballad in Morocco a year or two ago.<sup>1</sup> Another Greek piece is *The Bridesmaid who became the Bride*. The discarded concubine dresses herself up with oriental splendour and dazzles the eyes of the officiating priests and the bridegroom. The details of her toilette are given in virtually the same words in the Catalan *Lady of Aragon* and Spanish

<sup>1</sup> W. Starkie, *Don Gypsy*, London, 1936, p. 118. The Christopoulos family were Greeks, but the old Paraschiva was a Rumanian. Hence they disputed as to whether it was a bridge or a house that Master Manoli built.

*St. Simon's Hermitage*, which are mere fragments. The text is found in Greek as far west as Corsica.

The influence of Serbian poetry has been very strong on the like-minded peoples of the Balkan peninsula, and it is perceptible in such Czech pieces as *The Robber's Bride*, *The Turk's Bride*, and also in Polish Galicia and the Ukraine. An interesting chain of ballads connects the Serbian *Banović Strahinja* with the Bulgarian *Iskren and Milica* and the Russian *Mihail Potyk*. The husband is engaged in furious battle with a would-be seducer. They fight to a standstill, and appeal to the lady—who helps the aggressor. The husband is tied up, but released by his dog or miraculously, and kills both the guilty ones. There is clearly only one story involved, but it is less easy to give it a home; perhaps Bulgaria.

These instances are a few out of many. Particularly easy would it be to increase the number of ballads which have travelled a short distance from a richer land to its neighbours, as from Germany to Lusatia. Beyond these there is a nebulous mass of floating motifs, which are sometimes bound together in quite precise formulas: the May Song which stretches across all Europe, and follows much the same order in the Greek *Swallow Song* as in France and Spain; the Power of Song to draw down birds and bring up the fish round the keel of a vessel, or else bind a nix, smash a bridge, or toss the sea; Love which will alone make sacrifices, when no parents or relatives avail; the intoxicating Power of Beauty, the tests of true love. A picture of the essential unity of European balladry grows clearer and clearer as we consider such cases. The signs of inventiveness multiply, and the evidence of readiness to learn and adapt interesting themes lies everywhere around the student. There is no vague, formless, 'nameless and dateless' bubbling of mixed motifs; but artistic creation according to prescribed patterns and the intelligent, even eager, appreciation of such work. Such appreciation does not involve incapacity to create. When all the connexions are worked out, each ballad area is left with dozens or hundreds or thousands of pieces peculiarly its own, according to the richness of local tradition. There are richer and poorer areas, as there are richer and poorer written literatures; but there is something of interest in the achievements of every people, and even in the special significance each has given to the common material.

Before leaving this chapter, it would be well to mention that ballad variants can often be followed over a national map as ballads

have been over the map of Europe. Where the variants are numerous and can be associated with the oral tradition of single villages, they can be connected by lines which will reveal, as in linguistic geography, how the newer variants have thrust the older into forgotten pockets. New and old can be seen on the contemporary map. In Finland this method has shown that ballads have spread from the coast, exposed to Scandinavian and German influences, to their present fastnesses of Russian and Finnish Carelia. In Spain a similar investigation of two ballads (*Gerineldo*, *The Interrupted Wedding*) showed their expansion from the south or south-east towards the north-west.<sup>1</sup> Such demonstrations concern the specialists who study each individual area; but they show in detail what this chapter seeks to establish 'grosso modo': that creation is not a spontaneous effervescence of some mystically conceived people, but the work of humble but genuine artists whose songs have been admired, acquired, and spread by persons who, without being professionals, have a special aptitude for the art of minstrelsy.

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, in the *Revista de Filología Española*, vii, 1920.

## VII

### THE DESCENT OF BALLADS

EPICAL ballads have, for more than a century, aroused an interest greater than their intrinsic worth, since they seemed to offer a clue to the rise of the great traditional epics. The ballads and epics which treat of the Cid Campeador have the same hero, subject, and incidents; they are both forms of traditional literature, expressed in not dissimilar language and metre; and it is natural to suppose that the simpler form will have come before the more complex. The ballad has been described as 'logically' the most primitive form of poetry. On such a supposition Bouterweck<sup>1</sup> opened his account of Spanish literature with the hypothesis that 'The poetic spirit . . . was doubtless first manifested in romances and popular songs'. The hypothesis was most attractive where ballads were not extant, either because it seemed a providential clue to a lost antiquity, or simply that scholarly ingenuity was not, in such a case, cramped by too accurate a knowledge of facts. To surprise the secrets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, tracing their origins in a 'sequel of songs and rhapsodies', 'loose songs not collected together in the form of an epic poem until about 500 years after',<sup>2</sup> was a thrilling achievement; and it was followed by the discovery of the 'twenty popular ballads, originally handed down orally, but written down about 1190 or 1200', which Lachmann had discerned in the *Nibelungenlied*, and the 'cantilènes' which Gaston Paris and Léon Gautier saw at the roots of the *Chanson de Roland*. The Greek klephtic 'tragoudia' served to demonstrate the fact of ballad literature in Greek, and the Akritic epos had not yet emerged to show how ambiguous such evidence might be. For at least three-quarters of a century epic criticism was dominated by the hypothesis of ballad priority.

This hypothesis was formally disproved for Spain by Milá y Fontanals,<sup>3</sup> who showed that in every case the Spanish 'romances' are much younger than the corresponding 'cantares de gesta'. Pio Rajna soon after commenced his hunt for Merovingian epics, as

<sup>1</sup> F. Bouterweck, *History of Spanish Literature* (trans. Thomasina Ross), London, 1842, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> 'Homer', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (quoting Bentley, and Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, 1795). See further 'Nibelungenlied'.

<sup>3</sup> M. Milá y Fontanals, *De la Poesía heroico-popular en España*, 1874.

the sources and prototypes of later epics; W. P. Ker doubted whether epics could arise by stitching ballads together; and A. Heusler<sup>1</sup> showed that, in fact, stitched ballads are just ballads after all, and quite unepic. The question was investigated with the utmost care by D. Comparetti,<sup>2</sup> apropos of the Finnish *Kalevala*. The *Kalevala* is a poem of indubitable merit, enjoying a certain unity of tone, and even of subject, and there are popular songs extant from which Lönnrot made his selection. The investigation made it clear that Lönnrot was far from being the sort of rhapsode supposed by the Wolfian theory, and that he had produced something very different from the Homeric poems. 'Let it suffice', wrote Comparetti,

that we have here shown, from the observations to which the *Kalevala* has led us, how devoid of foundation is the theory, under whatever form it presents itself, which sees in the ancient poems we have mentioned nothing but songs mechanically joined together; and hence authorizes the decomposition of these poems into the elements from which they are supposed to be built up. Any attempt at decomposing organic poems that do not present a variety of written redactions, sets out from a principle that is arbitrary, is carried through with insufficient criteria, [and] is and ever will be barren, fruitless toil.

There is also chronology. We have seen that the European ballad is the result of a social condition which is defined, for each nation, within precise limits. It opens after the great migrations and crusades have subsided, and medieval man has settled down to cultivate his own acre; and it closes when reading draws away the ballad-monger's best patronage. Such conditions are, in the west of Europe, definitely medieval in time; in the east, they are medieval in spirit and partly in time. Their epoch is part of their nature. Ballads so conditioned cannot serve to reveal the sources of Homer's poems or even of the *Chanson de Roland*. The preservation of accurate historical information across centuries in which writing and reading can have played little part in conserving knowledge remains as puzzling as before. We have to rule out the ballads as testimony, though we cannot rule out the notion of simpler songs preceding more complex. For the Germanic epos these songs are recorded by Jordanes as 'carmina paene storico

<sup>1</sup> A. Heusler, *Lied und Epos*, Dortmund, 1905 ('testibus' Robin Hood and Marsk Stig).

<sup>2</sup> D. Comparetti, *The Traditional Poetry of the Finns*, trans. Isabella M. Anderton, London, 1898.

ritu', and he gives some of their heroes: Eterpamara, Hanale, Fridigern, Vidigoia. He knew a poem on Filimer and the first wanderings of the Goths, and his information about the great Ermanaric was coloured by poetical reminiscences. The form and manner of such poems is beyond conjecture. They may have been epyllia or short improvisations preserved in traditional prose contexts; they may have been brief and dramatic like the *Edda* or long and circumstantial like the *Beowulf*. They may have been eked out by genealogies, with legends entangled among the names. They may have been epinician odes. In the Russia of Rurik's successors it was customary to break out into paeans after any great or little triumph, and we are told that 'veliĉanija' were sung for Andreĭ Bogoljubski in 1149, Mstislav in 1209, and Daniel Romanoviĉ in 1251. The famous *Slovo* called *Igor's Expedition* mingles paeans and dynastic lists among bursts of narrative. Dragomanov has reproduced several epinicia among his Ukrainian folk-songs, one of which runs:

Famous, fair, renowned N . . .,  
 What the deed that brought thee glory?  
 Dusk—and on horse the saddle's laid,  
 Day—he alights at Tsarigrad,  
 and fights and fights with Tsarigrad.  
 Out comes the Tsar so sore afraid,  
 and burghers hasten, counsel take,  
 if any gift his ire may slake.

Such poems would suffice to preserve the meagre historical details of the 'byliny'. The Germanic songs may have been of this type or some other; but the ballads proper offer no sufficient clue.

By way of antithesis to the ballad theory of epic origins there has arisen, on a Spanish initiative, an epic theory of ballad origins.

The people, hanging on the lips of the (epic) minstrel, caused him to repeat the most striking passages in a long epic poem so as to commit to memory the happiest verses. They forgot then the insipid commonplaces, the sluggish developments common in these poems of the decadence, but they faithfully preserved the memory of the culminating points of the narrative or the finest episodes which these strolling

<sup>1</sup> It is Milá y Fontanals theory, applied by M. Menéndez y Pelayo, in his *Tratado de los romances viejos*, and developed, with variations, by R. Menéndez Pidal. The passage quoted is from the last-named's *Épopée castillane à travers la littérature espagnole*, Paris, 1910.

rhapsodes of the last epoch of epic recitations had been unable to alter or had been lucky enough to imagine in their search for new sensations. These passages, thus conserved and often repeated by heart, when isolated by the surrounding people, became the oldest extant ballads.

It is the theory of 'fragmentation'. In more recent essays Sr. Menéndez Pidal has given this doctrine a less mechanical cast, allowing a greater place to the artistic sense of the ballad-maker. The application has been to Spanish conditions only. It assumes (what is not established) the superior antiquity of the epical ballads in the *Romancero*, and goes on to assert that these established a mould into which other sorts of 'romances' could be cast. In other countries we find evidence of contact between epic poems and ballads, in which the latter are of younger birth. A straightforward theory of fragmentation would be difficult to apply, since the epic originals are, outside Spain, almost wholly conjectural. A brief survey of the whole ground will show that there are points in common between the Spanish experience and that of other lands.

There is only one case in all Europe in which we can place a ballad against its indubitable original in the older style, viz. when comparing the Danish *Tord af Havsgaard* with the Eddic *Thrymskviða*. The ballad is known also in Sweden and Norway, but the Danish version has been known from the sixteenth century, and is fuller and better. The two poems are of almost equal length, the ballad being somewhat longer, thanks to its looser structure and repetitions. Individual phrases are preserved as well as the general outline, but there has been a subtle change of the poetic temperature. The Thor of the *Thrymskviða* is a god of Asgard, named by a liturgical name, and acting in the correct relationship to Loki and Freya. The Thor of *Tord af Havsgaard* is a farmer:

Now there was Thor of Sea-garth,  
rides over the fair green lea,  
and he has lost his hammer of gold,  
was taken so far away.  
*Thor, he tameth his foals on the heath.*

Freya is a 'proud young miss' and Loki is 'Lokke the jester', and the giant Thrym of mythological Jötunheim has become 'the old troll-count' of Nørrefjæld. The divine Hammer has no mythical powers, and Thor's eating and beating are merely a huge jest:

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Now there was Thor of Sea-garth,  
 with the trolls he holds good Thing:  
 full fifteen trolls and forty-five  
 they lay there in a ring.  
*Thor, he tameth his foals on the heath.*

The jesting note is present in the *Thrymskviða*, but it is more discreet. The singer finds these gods, in whom he only half believes, amusing in their thick-headedness and petty vanities, like the gods of Homer. The broader humanity and generalized situations make of the ballad a new creation, different in class, though partly identical in language and content, from the aristocratic epyllion.

There is no comparison quite so close in Spanish experience. The epics of Spain consist of the *Poem of the Cid*, the *Rodrigo*, and a fragment called *Roncesvalles*. The former is extant in a manuscript executed, without great care, in 1307, but the original must have been composed about 1140. Only one of the ballads of the Cid answers to this poem, namely the ballad of *Búcar*. The resemblance is not close; Búcar is killed in the *Poem*, but survives in the ballad. In the *First General Chronicle* Búcar is made to survive, because in fact he did outlive the Cid; it has been conjectured that this chronicle used a refundition of the old *Poem*, and it has been noted that the ballads correspond generally with late refunditions of the epic material.<sup>1</sup> If that be so, the hope of directly comparing ballad with epic disappears. The *Rodrigo* has the advantage, under this hypothesis, of being a late poem; but its state is so deplorable, so unlike poetry, that the single instance in which comparison is possible becomes fruitless. There are two ballads which may be conjectured to be part of the *Roncesvalles* poem, but they do not correspond with the 100 extant lines. If we augment our material by admitting that the lines reconstructed by Sr. Menéndez Pidal from the Madrid National Library's manuscript chronicle (F182) are genuinely epic—as they may well be—we have still to face a discrepancy between the circumstantial manner of the epic lament and the elliptic ballad style.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, in his edition of the *Cid*, his *Leyenda de los Infantes de Lara*, and in his note on the Fernán González cycle in the *Homenaje a Menéndez y Pelayo*.

<sup>2</sup> The discrepancy has been noted by M. Menéndez y Pelayo, *Tratado de los romances viejos, Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, Madrid, 1924, xi, pp. 276–80. See also S. Griswold Morley, *Spanish Ballad Problems*, University of California Publications, 1925.



For these reasons it is impossible to clinch the proof of 'fragmentation' by pointing to any epic fragment which is a ballad. The correspondences are striking enough, despite the differences noted, and fragmentation offers a possible, though not a certain, explanation. Apart from the instances cited we know Spanish epics not in their verse form, but as embedded in the prose of general chronicles of Spain. The ballads correspond with the data of later chronicles better than with the earlier, and it is possible these data may be due to redactions of the old poems. The ballads which deal with the destruction of Spain by the Moors and King Roderick's death in 711 are based frankly on a prose text, the *Crónica Sarraquina* of 1430. They are not really epical ballads; indeed, it is not certain that there was a Spanish epic on this subject, the surviving forms of which are prose traditions reported by Arabic and Castilian historians. There was a French epic on the theme: *Anseïs de Karthage*. A number of ballads deal with Bernardo del Carpio, his resistance to the French at Roncesvalles, and his efforts to release his father from imprisonment. They are not old, and all but one could have been excavated from the chronicles. One of the ballads on Count Fernán González, liberator of Castile, appears to be authentic, the others being examples of mere ballad-making. We are here dealing with a 'cantar de gesta' summarized in the *Crónica Najerense* (about 1160), but not in the *Historia Silense* (1109); it was probably assembled between those dates by the use of common novelistic matter, seeing that all the episodes are of a romanesque sort. About 1250 the 'cantar' was rewritten in rhyming quatrains by a cleric of no great literary attainments, and his work was turned into the prose of the *First General Chronicle*. The old 'cantar' doubtless lingered on, supplying to later chronicles and the ballad of the ford of Carrión details which the cleric had ignored. The case hardly requires us to hypothesize a second redaction of the 'cantar', since we have only indirect access to the first.

The ballads of the *Infantes de Lara* cycle are more numerous, vivid, and of primitive passion. It is a family history of revenge and treachery, and as such did not attract the notice of the earlier historians who wrote in Latin concerning the affairs of kings. The vernacular historians were thus not tempted to distort the legend in the attempt to make it square with some preconceived notion of history, and we can be more sure in this case than in others that

they have reproduced in their prose the matter of the epic poems. The assurance is doubled by the copious traces of versification still visible in the prose; it is almost always possible to pick out the assonances. The kernel of the legend seems to have been a disaster in which a Moorish frontier chieftain and his sons perished in 972. The epic story concerns a Christian family, and presents other points of difference from the historical facts; but the relations supposed to be normal between Moors and Christians are such as were terminated in 975, when Al-Manşûr took over personally the conduct of the frontier wars. The original 'cantar de gesta' must have arisen in the last quarter of the tenth or the first half of the eleventh century; it is reproduced in the *First General Chronicle* (1289). The conclusion of the tale is a work of imagination, however historical the first part may be; it is a tale of revenge which invites amplification. From one chapter in the *First General Chronicle* it swelled to four in the *Second* (1344); and its aggrandizement continued until, in 1834, the revenge became the whole story.<sup>1</sup> The new details arise out of the old, but are not compatible with them. They are a new conclusion, and a conclusion in verse, as we learn from the numerous assonances in new series. It is clear, then, that for the *Infantes de Lara* a new redaction arose between 1289 and 1344, more romanesque and circumstantial, less tragic and more pathetic, with humorous touches and a greater geographical spread. It is this epic which is represented in the ballads, probably by immediate descent.

Lastly, the ballads of the Cid amount to more than two hundred and cover the ground of three epic poems: the *Mocedades* or youthful feats, of which the *Rodrigo* is a debased form, the *Siege of Zamora* (lost), and the *Poem* or feats of his maturity. For our present purpose the Cid ballads prove disappointing. Only twice is it possible to attempt a comparison, and the comparison reveals differences which force the critic to take refuge in fresh hypotheses. The theme was doubtless too popular. It invited improvisation, since it could count on an interested acceptance; new ballads drove out the old, so that the whole cycle seems relatively modern and arbitrary.

When we transfer our glance from Spain to the Germanic North, we encounter more evidence that traditional epics have provoked the rise of epical ballads. The contact is less intimate than in

<sup>1</sup> Don Ángel de Saavedra, Duque de Rivas, *El Moro Expósito*, Paris, 1834.

Spain. The ballads belong, for the most part, to the fifteenth or fourteenth century, but the corresponding epics had run their course by the tenth. Some of them, like the *Nibelungenlied* and *Kudrîn*, received new and more ample proportions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries under the influence of the courtly epics of France; but even so, the contact between epic and ballad in the same cycle is hard to establish.

Our own *Beowulf* is the only complete survivor of this ancient epic mode, and it has had no ballad consequences; nor has the fragmentary *Fight at Finnsburg*. The adventures of Walther of Aquitaine, his escape from Attila's court with his beloved Hilda, and his great fight in the Vosges, survive in two tiny fragments of our *Waldere* and in the Swiss-Latin *Waltharius* (tenth century). The story should belong to the German tribes on France's eastern border, but it appears to have effected a lodgement in Aquitaine, taking the local name Gaiffier. From such a version the Castilian ballads of *Gaiferos* descend. Offshoots of the legend are the romances of *Aye d'Avignon* and the *Comtesse de Ponthieu*, and also the Provençal ballad *Escriveta*, with its novel maritime setting, which has spread to neighbouring lands in the style described in the last chapter. While there is not much reason to doubt this genealogy, the fact is that the original poem is very imperfectly known and each essential link in the evidential chain has been lost.

Germany offers the epic and ballad *Hildebrand*. The epic belongs to the ninth century, and is a fragment. It may not be a fragment of a longer epic poem, since in reality old Master Hildebrand has no other achievement than this fight with his son; the poem may be a planned fragment, like Tennyson's *Ulysses* and *Morte d'Arthur*.<sup>1</sup> The battle ended disastrously, and did not please the taste of later times. In the Norse *Thidrekssaga*, itself depending on a Low German *Dietrichs Saga*, the combatants are reconciled, and return happily, and even playfully, to the Lady Ute. So the story was told as the twelfth century gave way to the thirteenth; and so the story is told in the ballad *Hildebrand*, with additional developments of a sentimental kind. It is clear that the saga has intervened between the ballad and the epic fragment, so that there is no direct contact between the two. It was probably an older, more epic form of the story which travelled to Russia and gave rise to the bitter ballad of *Il'ja and his Son*; though the latter might also have been

<sup>1</sup> I owe this suggestion to Professor Norman, of London.

inspired by Firdausi's account of Sohrab and Rustem, or the Greek *Tsamados and his Son*. The battle of father and son is a theme as old as the *Telegeneia*, and its medieval forms are too scattered to be reduced to one original. In addition to the *Hildebrand*, Germany offers the curious *Ermanaric's Death*, which reads more like an exercise in the medieval epic style than a ballad. It also appears to arise from the lost *Dietrichs Saga*. Between the *Wolfdietrich* and the *Hunter from Greece* (*Jäger aus Griechenland*) there is a connexion, though distant.

The *Nibelungenlied* and *Kudrûn* offer special cases of ballad and epic contact, since they existed in both primitive and medieval forms. The story of the Nibelungs appears in the *Edda*, the *Völsungasaga*, and the medieval German poem still extant. The testimony of the *Edda* is twofold, since it relies on versions already established in the north, and on later German information. (The account given by *Beowulf* lies outside this connexion, since the author lived before Sigurd-Siegfried was invented.) The legend has given no German ballads, but several in Scandinavia. Once again, the *Thiðrekssaga* intervenes, through the incorporation of the story of the Volsungs. The Faeroese *Regin the Smith* goes back, apparently, to a lost twelfth-century original, distinct from the Eddic *Reginismál*; the *Brinhildar-táttur* depends on the *Thiðrekssaga*, *Völsungasaga*, and some other source; and the *Högnatáttur* on the *Thiðrekssaga*, through a west Norse song.<sup>1</sup> The Danish *Grimhild's Revenge* may owe something to this song, but has suffered the influence of the twelfth-century *Nibelungenlied*. It is one of the ballad-class which aims at summarizing in the traditional style the material of some more aristocratic romance. *Brynilds Vise* differs from the Eddic treatment and from the *Nibelungenlied*. The Norse *Sigurð Svein* maintains an association with the Eddic *Reginismál* and *Fáfnismál*, which is not evident in the more developed Danish *Sivard Snarensvend*.

*Kudrûn* stands next to the *Nibelungenlied* for popularity and merit, as the *Odyssey* does to the *Iliad*. An older form of the legend must have been current under the name of *Hilde*, the plot of which is summarized by Snorri at the end of his prose *Edda*. It is this Nordic form which is conjectured to be at the base of the Danish *Havsfrun*, but the German ballads may derive from *Kudrûn* itself. The epic is composed of conventional materials, and has only one

<sup>1</sup> H. de Boor, *Die färöischen Lieder des Nibelungenzyklus*, Heidelberg, 1918.

memorable scene. It is the moment when the bullied girl goes out to wash clothes on the sea-shore, and two strangers approach, treating her as if she were a servant. They prove to be her fiancé and her brother; she throws her washing away, and they concert an escape. In the ballads there is no place for the fiancé, and the incident is reduced to the discovery of a sister in distress by her brother. The detail that she is washing clothes is preserved in some ballads, but not in all. In late German derivatives she is represented as a drudge in a hostelry, exposed to the insults of travellers. Thus the whole plot of *Kudrún* is extraordinarily simplified; it is reduced to the one striking episode, and that is stripped of all confusing detail. Hence the German *Südeli, Meererin, Starling and Bathtub* (the tub is all that remains of the original laundry), *Rediscovered Sister, Rediscovered Princess*. The Czechs have a late form of this cycle (*Nalezená Seštrá*), in which the girl is found to be a barmaid. In the Spanish *Don Bueso*<sup>1</sup> we have a more heroic variant, and in the French *Maunariée vengée par ses frères*, Provençal *Clothildo*, if they belong to the same cycle, we have versions with almost all the characteristic lines effaced.

The *Thiðrekssaga*, which we have seen affecting the ballads of the Nibelung cycle, also lies behind a number of the best Danish ballads: the *Tournament* (or *They were seven and seventy*), *King Diderik's raid into Berting's Land*, *Viderik Verlandson's fight with Longbone Giant*. *King Diderik and the Lion* is the *Wolfdietrich* legend, which is connected with the French *Ywein* and the German *Heinrich der Löwe*. The pattern of these adventures serves for other ballads of free composition, such as *Berner Rise and Orm Ungersvend* (unless this is based on some lost original) and *Diderik and Holger Danske*. The ballad of *Samsing* belongs to the prolegomena of the saga. We are told that the old Norse saga, of the early thirteenth century, rests on a German original, and this need not have been very much older. It is true there was a Theodoric of Verona, the great fifth-century Ostrogothic king. Deor mentions him in his lament:

Theodoric held thirty winters  
the Mærings' burg; that was to many known.

He is a dignified recipient of Gudrun's laments, and so provoked Attila's jealous reproaches in the Eddic *Guðrúnarkviða III*, and he

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, 'Supervivencia del poema de Kudrún', *Revista de Filología Española*, xx, 1933.

was the chief representative of the beaten German peoples at the Hunnish court. But, unlike his ancestor Ermanaric, he had no 'geste' of his own until the late twelfth century, when he suddenly became the centre of a sub-Arthurian court, and the representative of all Germany. The sagas of Weland the Smith and Widga helped to give the proper introduction to his feats, and the *Vilkina-saga*, *Völsungasaga*, *Biterolf and Detlieb*, *Waltharius*, *Hildebrand*, *Ermanaric's Death*, and other heroic pieces were annexed to provide the necessary incidents. His own part is chiefly to sally out against the most reputable enemies, for no reason at all, and prove his superiority. It is on this model that the Danish ballads are based, both those which come from the text of the saga, and those which are free. His confidence is overweening:

King Diderik sits in Brattingsborg  
and out he looks so wide:  
'No man know I in all the world,  
that can be deemed my like.'

Then answered Brand Sir Vifferlin,  
for he had wandered so wide:  
'E'en will I show you a champion good,  
that well with you dare strive.'

That is how the raid on Berting's Land opens; as Berting's Land seems to be Bretagne, his achievements prove the superiority of the German Round Table over the Breton one. An unknown minstrel supposed he made an attack on Denmark in the same spirit.

King Diderik sends King Holger word,  
and thus he bade him say:  
'What, whether wilt thou strive with us,  
or wilt thou tribute pay?'

Holger refused, and won his fight, as he had previously won his duel against the giant Burmand, who was also thought of as one of those powerful Germans who perpetually threatened the southern frontier of Denmark.

The saga is interesting also for the notice it takes of the Russian hero Il'ja of Murom. He is called 'Il'jas af Greka' and is supposed to be the bastard son of Hertnit (= Ortnit), whose eldest son Osantrix ruled in Lusatia, and his second was Valdimar or Vladimir of Pulinaland. 'Ilias von Riuzen' is also mentioned in *Ortnit*; he

was therefore an epic hero of Russia whose fame had spread to the German peoples in the thirteenth century, though the account they gave of him was different from that of the surviving 'byliny'. Conversely, the 'byliny' of Il'ja bear traces of the legend of Detlev Danske (or *Detlieb*), in the motif of his powerless early years, the manner of his leave-taking, and the early skirmishes with robbers. The robber Solovei owes something to Detlev's opponent, the bandit Sigurd.

We have already mentioned the ballad adaptation of the Eddic *Thrymskviða*, but the indebtedness of the ballads goes further than that. Only one of the supernatural pieces is used, and in the heroic ones of the Nibelung cycle we find that the ballad poets have drawn on newer German material by preference. There remains the similarity of plot between the second *Helgi* lay and *Ribbolt and Guldborg* (our *Earl Brand* or *The Douglas Tragedy*), and that between the two poems which make up the *Svipdagsmál* and the ballad *Ungen Svejdal*. In this latter case there need be little doubt that we are dealing with two forms of the same tradition; but the interval between the Eddic and ballad styles is immense. There is a ritual solemnity about the Eddic poems. The waking of Gróa in her grave is only less impressive than that of Angantyr, and the riddles propounded by Fiölsvinn to Svipdag, while they are of maddening triviality, have a serious magical import. All this is loosened in the ballad style, where magical gifts are accepted with the naïvety of a fairy-tale and riddling is a mere contest of wits. In this case also there is an evident contrast between the aristocratic manner of the *Edda*—mythological or heroic—and the broad, though naïve, humanism of the ballads. *Alf i Odderskjær* is a rehandling of the *Hervararsaga*, which reckons among the *Eddica minora*, and *Regnar and Kragelille* with the *Fight with the Dragon* depend on the post-heroic saga of *Ragnar Loðbrok*.

Yet one more important Germanic epos to be encountered in Scandinavian balladry is the tale of *Hagbard and Signe*, the Tristan and Isolt of the far north. Saxo Grammaticus has reproduced the legend in prose and verse, basing his narrative on the older, more circumstantial epic which has been lost. The Danish ballad is one of the finest of all the 'viser'. The central incident is Hagbard's disguise in woman's clothes in order to penetrate to Signe's apartment. It survives, probably, in the German and Dutch *Prince a-wooing* or *Disguised Margrave's Son*.

Later sagas are used freely in the formation of Norse and Faeroese ballads, and the Faeroese *Ormurin langi* (from *St. Olaf's saga*) shows that the process of hewing ballads from such sources has continued to our own times.

The French 'chansons de geste' have had no consequences in the 'chansons populaires', which originated in the lyric only, nor in Italy, Germany, or England; but the Spanish 'romances' and the Scandinavian 'viser' have been deeply affected. In Spain there circulated a local version of the *Roncesvalles* epic, in a late form which gave Reynaud de Montauban more importance than Roland. Reynaud has the same prominence in *King Marsin's Flight*, a ballad which is manifestly a fragment. Another ballad, that of *Lady Alda*, described in pathetic detail the foreboding dreams of Lady Aude and the receipt of the news of Roland's death. This piece is complete in itself, but corresponds in general to the pathetic amplification given to this incident by decadent epics. By a curious development, Roland's sword Durendal became a person in Spanish balladry, and there is a pretty little cycle describing *Durandarte's* love for Belerma and his dying messages. They recall, by way of contrast, the grimly tragic *Sword of Vengeance* (*Hævnersverdet*) of Danish and Norse tradition, which leaps of its own accord to kill a banesman and his child, and can hardly be stopped from killing its holder also. There also is a sword that speaks, though still a sword, fitted into an imaginative tableau of epic circumstances. There is a small fragment of a Norse ballad of Roncesvalles (*Rolandskvæði*) as well as the Faeroese *Runsivals Stríð*, a summary based on the *Karlamagnussaga*.

Excavations conducted in this saga have given the Faeroese a number of not very interesting Carolingian ballads: the *Geipa tåttur* which reproduces the gabs and incidents of Charlemagne's pilgrimage, *Emunds ríma* on Roland's youthful feats, *Ódvald's ríma* relating his fight with this pagan, *Flóvants ríma*, *Runsivals Stríð*, and *Ólufu kvæði*, corresponding to the Icelandic *Landres-rímur*. The history of the Ogier ballads in Denmark and Spain is more remarkable.<sup>1</sup> The cycle is divided into the thirteenth-century *Enfances*, which describe Ogier's combat with the monstrous

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Entwistle, 'Concerning certain Spanish ballads in the French cycles of *Aymeri*, *Aiol* (Montesinos), and *Ogier de Dinamarche*', *Studies presented to L. E. Kastner*, Cambridge, 1932. S. Grundtvig, *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, No. 30.



Brunamont to save Lady Gloriande for his friend Karaheut, and the twelfth-century *Chevalerie* retailing Charlemagne's injustice and Ogier's long pursuit of revenge. In each case the ballad poet has simplified a complex epic situation. The Dane cannot spare time to explain why Karaheut does not fight for his own bride, nor how Ogier comes to be a prisoner and yet a friend to some of his captors; he merely supposes that there was cowardice somewhere. The Castilian poet ignores the whole feudal system, which prevents Charlemagne from offering his son Charlot to Ogier's vengeance, but causes the emperor to consent at once, instead of after ten thousand lines, and to hurry on a farouche trial. The name Holger Danske was enough to make this hero famous as a defender of Danish liberties, and the refrain 'Holger Danske, he won victory over Burmand' seemed worthy to be carved on a Swedish chapel in the fifteenth century. Burmand represented the German menace with poetic vagueness; to make the point clearer, there arose the companion ballad of *King Diderik and Holger*. It was from such examples that the defenders of the Danneverk took heart in 1864. In the other peninsula, it is clear that 'Danish Urgel's' setting out from Mantua was the model for Don Quixote's first sally.

Whether the epic or a chapbook served as immediate model of the Spanish ballad is uncertain. The ballad summarizes the whole epic plot, which is one of injury and vengeance, but omits all those considerations which make for epic length. Had Charlemagne consented to punish Charlot, *Ogier de Dinamarche* would have concluded within three hundred lines; at long last Charlot is surrendered to Ogier as the price of his assistance in a time of desperate need. The ballad poet does what the epic poet avoided doing; the latter wished to spin out a long tale, the former to give the gist of the matter. The same treatment is given to the French *Aïol* by the author of the Spanish *Montesinos* ballads, to *Aimeri de Narbonne* in a brief fragment, &c. It is sometimes uncertain whether a Castilian ballad has the authority of a French epos or chapbook, as in the *Valdovinos* series and *Guarinos*. *Gerineldo*, one of the most popular of Castilian ballads, is vaguely Carolingian; it is connected with the legend of Eginhard's love for Emma, but it hardly amounts to more, in its ballad shape, than an improvisation on the theme of 'the squire of low degree'. On the other hand, the Carolingian convention is such in Spain, that common international ballad stuff is given a Carolingian setting. This is the case with

*Count Dirlos*, a derivative of the *Noble Moringer* theme, and *Count Claros of Montalban*. The latter employs the motif of the lover who brags of his real or imagined successes, a motif that appears separately in *Florencios* and *Count Vélez bragged*, and also in the Russian *Youth and Prudent Woman*; it goes on to describe lovers separated by imprisonment, whether of the young man (corresponding to the French *Pernette*) or the princess (*La Fille du Roi Loys*). The elaborate Carolingian setting of *Count Dirlos* resembles the equally elaborate Kiev atmosphere of *Dobrynja and Aljoša*. The maker of the *Gaiferos* ballads was also careful to collect Carolingian heroes to form an entourage for his escaping lovers, though there is no such background in the Provençal *Escriveta*.

The French romanesque influence is only second to the epical. Among the Arthurian legends, those of the Holy Grail proved to be too mystical to attract the ballad-monger's attention. There is a Castilian ballad, certified ancient by Nebrija in 1492, on one of Lancelot's adventures, which is akin to the *Lai de Tyolet* and an episode of the Dutch *Lanceloet*. Another ballad on this hero seems rather to be a free imitation of the romance in its general tenor. A ballad of the death of *Tristan*, also of ancient date, is composed of a few pregnant phrases taken from the last three chapters of the novel of *Tristán de Leonís*. There is an effaced relic of the same matter in Germany (*Liebestod*), and in Iceland and the Faeroes there are popular ballads (*Tristrams kvæði*, *Tístrams táttur*) based on the alternative conclusion of the romance. It is in England that the Arthurian cycle is most developed in pieces largely independent of the great romances: *The Boy and the Mantle*, *King Arthur and King Cornwall*, *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*. They are 'ballads of minstrelsy'; that is, the evidence of personal composition is so strong that one may doubt whether these pieces are truly traditional. *Floire and Blancheflor* gives rise to German and English ballads, *Amis and Amiles* to one in Spanish, and the romance of the *Castellan de Coucy* is the source of the German and Dutch *Bremberger*. Similarly, the English *Hind Horn* is based on a romance which has been preserved in three shapes; the *Count of Rome* is founded on *Alexander von Metz*, and has spread from Germany to Scandinavia; and *Herzog Ernst*, though included in the standard German collections, is rather ballad-like than a ballad.

Before leaving the French area we must notice the effect of conventions laid down by literature. They have been mentioned at

the close of the last chapter, but have their place here also. There is the 'aubade', with its lovers who part; the Spring-song, with its sequence of set phrases; the 'pastourelle', degenerating into any frivolous encounter between a man and a maid (and so giving such urban consequences as *La Belle Barbière*); the 'maumariée' and the ampler convention of taking matrimony in vain; scorn of the timid lover; assignations by night and the consequent adventures. Once laid down, these conventions form moulds for new inventions which require little effort to imagine. They are an inexhaustible fount of Gallic wit, and operate more strongly in Flanders than in Germany, in Catalonia than in Castile, for in Castile marriage is taken seriously and its infringement is tragic. These are not cases where the student may compare an offshoot with an original, since there need be no direct original, but only a pattern. The pattern, however, is definitely of literary origin.

In the east of Europe we can hardly command such accurate documentation as in the west, and the relation between epos and ballad is less easy to define. Greek ballads were first known in their late European forms, chiefly the klephtic 'tragoudia' of Epirus describing guerrilla warfare against the Turks in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was much later that the great store of Cappadocian ballads from Asia Minor began to be opened, and the name and deeds of Digenis Akritas swam into our ken. The Greeks of Cappadocia have lived without much knowledge of their compatriots in Europe, under an alien rule. Only as a result of the disastrous Graeco-Turkish War and the consequent population-shifts have these isolated communities been brought into contact with Hellenic scholars. The collection and comparison of Akritic ballads is thus still under way; one hardly knows how far the name extends or what other cycles should be marked off from those of Digenis. A kind of epic poem on this hero was published by Sathas and Legrand in 1875, from a fifteenth-century manuscript of Trebizond, and other manuscripts have appeared more recently, of which H. Grégoire relies on that of Grottaferrata.<sup>1</sup> Apart from Digenis's defence of the Euphrates we have to allow for a 'geste' on the defence of Amorium, and for songs concerning the Apelates Philopappos, Ioannikis, and Kinnamos. The ballads and the epics

<sup>1</sup> C. Sathas and E. Legrand, *Collection de Monuments pour servir à l'étude de la Langue néo-hellénique*, nouv. sér. 6, Paris, Maisonneuve, 1875; and H. Grégoire's articles in *Byzantion*, v, vi, vii, 1929-32.

employ the same 'politic' metres, but are different in style and contents. Which came first and how they are related seem to be matters still 'sub judice', since the ingenious arguments of H. Grégoire have not been subjected as yet to any second examination.

Current opinion ascribes priority to the 'tragoudia', while conceding great age to the epos. *Basileios Digenes Akritas* is a poem which uses material from Genesius's biography of Basil I, with his feats of strength and prowess as a hunter. The date of Genesius is approximately the mid-tenth century. The Grottaferrata text states that the Holy Face relic is to be found at Edessa. It was removed to Constantinople in 944. Before this can be accepted as a 'terminus ante quem', we should have to be certain that no antiquarian information was accessible to the poet. In the Andros and Trebizond manuscripts there appears a certain 'Aaron', who can be identified with the third son of the last Tsar of western Bulgaria; he entered the Byzantine service and fought against the Seljuquids about the years 1047-59. This is taken to indicate a revision of the epos sometime after the middle period of the eleventh century. The Trebizond manuscript is of the fifteenth century, and it is such a poem as one would hesitate to place alongside the *Cid* or *Chanson de Roland*. The Greek employed is of a literary cast, and the author quotes his *Iliad*, Quintus Curtius, *Aldelaga* and *Olopé* (an erotic novel), and several books of the Bible. On the other hand, he lacks the characteristic merits of the traditional minstrel, for he cannot tell a story, and ruins several promising situations. He alludes to ballads on the Apelate chieftains, which his poem is intended to supersede.

The 'geste' of Digenis is connected with neighbouring literary works: with the Armenian epos of David of Sasoun, the history of 'Umar al-Nu'mân in the *Arabian Nights* (which Grégoire terms the 'Geste de Mélitène' corresponding to the part of the epos he terms 'Geste de l'Émir'); the Arabic chivalrous romance *Dât al-Himma wa'l-Battâl*; the Turkish metrical romance of Sayyid Battâl; and the Russian *Devgeniŭ*. Philopappos was, it seems, the original hero of the ballad *Syropoulos* (or *Scleropoulos*) *steals Kostantas' Bride*, later transferred to the Akritic cycle; *Andronikos's Son* was originally independent; and the song of *Amouris* (or *Amouropoulos*) was originally connected with the defence of Amorium in 838, and not with Digenis, turmarch of the Anatolians, who perished at Kopidnadon in 788. In addition to the 'Geste de Mélitène', Grégoire

discovers an 'Épopée commagénienne' (taking Philopappos as Antiochus Philopappos, the last king of Commagene, whose tomb was erected in front of the Athenian Acropolis in A.D. 114-116). This Commagenian epos would link the Byzantine to the Persian, since Kinnamos was a rival of Artabanes III, whose son Gotarzes or Goderz is a personage of the *Shāhnāma*.

We can indulge in such remote conjectures only at our peril. They are not unlike equally hardy theories about western epics, which have been discarded in favour of more restricted statements. We may retain chiefly the impression that the epics and epical ballads of Greece are somehow linked, as they are in the west, so that there is no absolute separation between oral and written literature.

Finally, there is the evidence of Russia. This also is inconclusive. We have already noticed that certain Germanic sources seem to be intimately related with the Russian 'byliny'. Detlev and Hildebrand are heroes who resemble Il'ja of Murom; he, in his turn, is the centre of a cycle of stories which might have had, at one time, a formal unity. To the compilers of the *Thiðrekssaga* and of *Ortnit*, Il'ja is a hero of epic mould associated with Vladimir of Kiev; but he is also connected with a Hertnit and an Osantrix quite unknown to the Russians. Some knowledge of French literature may have penetrated as far as Russia, since the rich Indian kingdom of Djuk Stepanovič reminds us of Prester John's realm and Charlemagne's pilgrimage; while Vasiliĭ Buslaev's evil-doings are like those of Robert le Diable. The Greek *Amouris* and *Tsamados* are analogues of *Saur Vanidovič* and *Il'ja and his Son*. An eclectic criticism<sup>1</sup> would go farther and enumerate, as well as those given, Yugoslav, Caucasian, Iranian, and Finnish elements in the 'byliny'; but in these remoter fields it is not always easy to feel confident as to the relationship of cause and effect. Some international ballad themes have also penetrated as far as medieval Russia: the rings of Marianson or Imogen, and the Noble Moringer's return home. There are too many unknown quantities to allow definite conclusions, but the evidence seems to indicate that the Russian 'byliny' arose with some knowledge of Germanic poems, whether German or Scandinavian, and that western and Balkan elements continued to penetrate so far.

<sup>1</sup> V. A. Keltujala, *Kurs Istorii Russkoĭ Literatury*, St. Petersburg, 1913, i, pp. 824-5.

On the other hand, the 'byliny' are strangely unlike the surviving exemplar of old Russian epic poetry, the *Slovo o Polku Igorevě*. The nucleus of this piece is an account of Igor of Novgorod's raid, in conjunction with his brother, against the Polovcy. It was an unsuccessful affair, but the poet favours Igor, who is represented as the pattern of headlong daring. He is still alive (he died in 1102). There are some fine descriptive passages, such as the one which compares the flight of the nomads' arrows to a storm at dawn. The nomads are pagans, but the Russians still believe in Stribog, Dažd'bog, and Div, the wood-demon. The hyperboles are many, and negative comparisons are used, but there is otherwise little resemblance to the 'bylina' style. Intermixed with the main theme are interpolations: one in praise of Svjatoslav of Kiev, who successfully defeated the Polovcy under Kobjak, can hardly be by the partisan of the unsuccessful Igor. Vladimir is mentioned, but only as a remote memory. On the other hand, the poet is skilled in the genealogies of more recent sovereigns in the various petty states. Not only is his work unconnected with any 'bylina', but it represents a technique and field of knowledge incompatible with their style. One must admit, however, that the unknown poet claims to be an innovator; he refuses to write in the style of the eleventh-century Bojań, and he even parodies his exordia. Bojań, therefore, may have treated other subjects in another fashion; but he can hardly have been so vague as to dates, times, and persons as the extant 'byliny'.

Finally, to close this chapter on the literary antecedents of European balladry, we should not forget the biblical and classical ballads which are by definition literary. They gave rise to the stories of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, Benjamin's cup, Samson, Holofernes, episodes of the life of Christ, the Samaritan woman, St. Stephen's martyrdom, the miracle of the roasted capon which crew, Judas's remorse, and also the ballad progeny of Orpheus and Eurydice, Leander and Hero, Heracles and Charon, Helen, Pyramus, and Troilus. There is no need to insist on them, since once the difficulty of recognition in some cases is overcome, the relations between original and copy are not hard to define.

## VIII

### THE ASCENT OF BALLADS

THE humble folk who listen to ballads with all their ears say little about their merits. 'That is a pretty ballad' or 'that is sad' are their comments, and they are even shy at mentioning them in the presence of strangers. They may suspect, as Vuk Stepan Karadžić did, that the townsman's curiosity is the preamble to some taunt; 'love songs' seem to them less worthy than other tales and songs; and they would rather display their acquaintance with some urban novelty. When they can be coaxed into singing traditional ballads, or surprised in the act, it is their absorbed attention alone that shows their esteem. They may discuss the event narrated or compare other variants of the same poem, but they have no adjectives to spare for the manner of balladry, and the wisest of critics have followed their example. The late W. P. Ker, that model of delicate and judicious appreciation, describes the ballad not by formula but by example.

In spite of Socrates and his logic (he wrote) we may venture to say, in answer to the question 'What is a ballad?'—'A ballad is *The Milldams of Binnorie* and *Sir Patrick Spens* and *The Douglas Tragedy* and *Lord Randal* and *Childe Maurice*, and things of that sort.'

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch,<sup>1</sup> who quotes these words, goes on to define the ballad style by examples, for which the following may be substituted: a ballad is

There came winging then two coal-black ravens,  
feathers dripping blood upon their shoulders,  
white the foam that from their beaks was dropping;  
in their talons bring they a hand of hero,  
on the finger is a ring all golden,  
and they cast it in the mother's bosom.

and

God destroy him Vuku Brankoviću!  
traitor to his kinsman at Kosovo.  
Lazar that day was by Turks confounded,  
when there perished all his goodly army,  
when there perished seven and seventy thousand:  
all was holy, all was honourable,  
all was as our loving God appointed.

<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, Oxford, 1910, 1932.

It is

The daylight dawns to eastward,  
it lightens over all.

and

There lies a castle in Austria  
that is so nobly founded,  
with silver and the red, red gold  
and marble stone surrounded.

and

The dance went down by Ribe street,  
there danced the knights so glad and fleet.

The dance went Ribe bridge along,  
there danced the knights with fair slashed shoen.

And first there danced Sir Riber-Ulv,  
he kept so well his faith and truth.

and

Abenamar, Abenamar,  
Moor above all Moors to me,  
on the day thou wert begotten,  
mighty signs there were to see,  
for a calm was on the ocean,  
and the moon was full and free;  
Moor beneath such sign begotten,  
hath no taint of falsity.

The accent is unmistakable, whether it be high:

See him, see him, where he cometh,  
cometh the avenging prince.

Then spake the sword in weary mood:  
'Now lusted I for thine own blood.'

The king, he rules the cities  
and over all the land,  
and over so many heroes bold  
with naked sword in hand.  
Let bonders mind their dwellings,  
the courtier his horse!  
The king, the king of Denmark,  
he ruleth town and force.

or low

He let strike iron for hand and foot,  
for he would wend from that land out.



And took his pilgrim-staff in hand,  
and far he journeyed from that land.

He journeyed o'er the Middle Sea,  
till he the Holy Grave did see.

And never healing message got,  
but the iron sat on hand and foot.

and

A linden stands in yonder vale,  
above 'tis broad, and under small.

or merely flat and pedestrian:

They fought one day, they fought for two,  
the third till even fell,  
they sat them down upon a stone,  
the heroes fain would dwell.

The accent is always unmistakable, and like no other.

It is when epithets are sought for this strange ballad charm, this *θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα* (as one of the ancients called Sappho), that the voices of critics seem unable to avoid a condescending note. The ballads are 'wild' or 'vulgar' and constitute only a 'sort of' poetry. Perhaps the earliest thoughtful reference to the genre—that of the fifteenth-century Castilian Marquess of Santillana—may be taken as typical, for he declares that the lowest sort of versifiers are 'those who without order, rule or count, make these ballads and songs in which persons of base and servile condition take pleasure'.<sup>1</sup> The base and servile did indeed find opportunity in the ballads for entertainment, but so did also men of rank and taste, though they had no way of justifying their emotion. Ballads affected the noble Sidney's soul; he was 'moved more than with a trumpet', though his schooling led him to note the absence of the 'gorgeous eloquence of Pindar'. Sidney<sup>2</sup> sought for a 'perfect Poesie', like the 'pure' poetry which certain modern critics have demanded. But this was not an objective which entered into the calculations of the 'blind crowder'; it was enough for him to deliver his song to his audience in a manner unknown to Pindar, and where Pindar's gorgeous eloquence would have been as unintelligible as thunder.

The publication of Percy's *Reliques* stimulated a new interest in these verses, by revealing to men of taste ballads which had been

<sup>1</sup> Santillana, *Letter to Don Peter*, ed. Prestage and Pastor, Oxford, 1927, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> P. Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*, London, 1595, sig. F.

buried beneath the degenerate songs of the eighteenth century. The critical aberration swung to the other extreme. In the Scottish ballads Herder caught the authentic accents of a people, and he demanded the same of his own German people. The *Stimmen der Völker*, the ballads, could do no wrong; they had the supreme virtue of being natural. Confounding poetry of different kinds or failing to discriminate between those that were similar, he included Góngora's polished songs among his ballads, and declared that 'the greatest singer of the Greeks, Homer, is also the greatest of folk poets'. Herder praises the naïvety and childlike accent of the ballads, their firmness, truth, liveliness, and assurance, their shuddering tragedies and passionate music, together with their innate nobleness: 'the older they are, the more popular and lively, and in the same measure the more bold and striking.' High and noble their speech; great and mighty the folk who sang them. And then he launches his impassioned appeal to the German folk—that vast kingdom, the kingdom of ten peoples: 'has the voice of your fathers faded away, is it silent in the dust?' Herder's passion sounded a loftier note than his matter demanded; he exaggerated the achievements of ballad poets. The inclusion of heteroclite poems in his collection led to such misprisions as F. W. Newman's: 'the style of Homer is direct, popular, forcible, quaint, flowing, garrulous: in all these respects it is similar to the old English ballad.' The sentence stirred the formidable anger of Matthew Arnold.<sup>1</sup> He declared that Homer is 'above all, noble'—a quality incompatible with

Now Christ thee save, thou proud portér,  
now Christ thee save and see,

and

While the tinker did dine, he had plenty of wine.

For this reason (he wrote) the ballad style and the ballad measure are eminently *inappropriate* to render Homer. Homer's manner and movement are always both noble and powerful: the ballad manner and movement are often either jaunty and smart, so not noble; or jog-trot and humdrum, so not powerful.

Andrew Lang and W. P. Ker are critics who have not shared this indignation against the ballad, but the general course of eulogy has been turned aside. A writer of our own day has said:

I believe that the aesthetic value of popular poetry, if we are to

<sup>1</sup> *On translating Homer.*

measure by an absolute poetic standard, is habitually overrated, perhaps mainly from reasons of sentiment. It is forgotten that the masterpieces, like *Sir Patrick Spens* or *Chevy Chase*, are exceptional and rare—how rare and how different to the ruck the perusal of a single volume of Child should convince any unbiassed person.<sup>1</sup>

'If we are to measure by an absolute poetic standard'—and if, perchance, such a standard exists. The classic and the critic demand the application of such standards; but the search for a poetry that shall be pure dissolves even the greatest works of art into unrecognizable fragments. The *Divine Comedy*, considered absolutely, becomes a cento of lyrics set in a long theological novel, and the *Lusiads* 'will always remain one of the world's greatest poems by reason of its magnificent lyric flights'. The lyric alone is short enough to sustain such scrutiny, and it would appear that the modern aesthetic has just skill enough to appreciate that which our waning poetical genius just suffices to produce—the artistic lyric. The poetry of the commonalty we neither produce nor admire. Those who, like Kipling and Watson, seek to express what many men feel are the more lightly esteemed for their art; while, on the other hand, the tribe of those who refine and polish and sublimate their art is left to prophesy before a void. It is not so that much of the world's greatest poetry has been composed, and it is not the way of the ballad. The greatest poets have written neither to extrovert their personalities nor to comply with the demands of taste, but to voice the common thought of masses of men. So Homer has been, in a sense, the voice of the Hellenes, and Virgil of imperial Rome; Dante, Cervantes, and Shakespeare were each the fruition of an age; Camões unburdened the 'illustrious Lusitanian breast', and Spenser and Milton gave utterance to a Puritanism, either sweetly reasonable or embattled and dogmatic. There have been great poems which can be assessed as 'pure poetry', such as the *Orlando Furioso*; but to the men of the sixteenth century Ariosto's masterpiece seemed wanting in substance or seriousness. We cannot be sure that it expresses something clamouring for utterance—

Glory and generous shame,  
the unconquerable mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

But these are the themes of a 'God-gifted organ-voice', and these, rather than absolute perfection, assure survival in literature. And

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Halliday, *Folk Studies*, London, 1924, p. xi.

common, fundamental, moving themes of this kind inspire the best of ballads.

The ballads *are*, and that is their best justification. Despite changes of fashion and of language, they have clung to the people's memory with strange tenacity. This is not to claim for their genre the quality of immortality; on the contrary, we have seen that they have their begetting, and that printed literature is the sign of their end. But they have clung to life, sometimes during four to seven centuries, and that without any aid from courtly society (which has favoured romances and troubadour lyrics), nor from the schools (who have adored the ancient classics and are now embalming the moderns), nor from official literature, contemptuous of such wild snatches. Unwritten and traditional as they are, they owe their survival to each individual singer and each individual audience. They live only in the moment of performance. It has simply been worth while to recreate them time and again throughout the centuries, since on each single occasion they have signified something to their unlettered hearers and have moved them more than with a trumpet. It is a glory not often achieved by the great artistic poets, and when achieved, it is through some partial endowment of the generous ballad simplicity. In Tasso's case, for instance,

the fishermen's wives of the Lido . . . sat along the shore in the evenings while the men were out fishing, and sang stanzas from Tasso and other songs at the pitch of their voices, going on till each could distinguish the responses of her own husband in the distance.<sup>1</sup>

But how much of the *Gerusalemme* could be recovered from their memories? How faithfully modern ballad singers have preserved versions of Danish and Castilian ballads unknown to the collectors in the sixteenth century! In praise of Burns's and Gil Vicente's gift of spontaneous song, it has been said that one cannot know where the received traditional matter ends and the new creation begins. The ballads have survived, fragile and imperfect as they may seem, so long as the society for which they were created has endured, and longer. The critic's business is not to apply 'a priori' standards, but to look for the qualities which have justified their amazing survival.

Ballads are to be accepted as true. Truth is, perhaps, not a quality demanded by the aesthete, but it is the necessary leaven of

<sup>1</sup> Countess Martinengo Cesaresco, *The Study of Folk Songs*, London (Everyman), p. 97.

traditional narrative poetry, whether epic or ballad; and whether in Plato's thought or that of Alfonso the Wise, the discovery that the poet has indulged in fabling causes a sharp feeling of exasperation. The audience for which the minstrel composes, and of which he is a part, is not critical in the factual sense, and applies its own peculiar standards of verisimilitude. One may note these standards in the treatment of the supernatural: almost wholly absent from the Castilian 'romancero', this element is abundant in the 'viser' and the Balkan ballads, because that is how nature seems to each. The presence of nixes in a Castilian ballad or their absence from the Scandinavian repertoire would seem equally untrue to nature; it is part of our northern experience that winter and storm and raging waters are spirits bitterly hostile to human life. As evidence of the truth of their ballads, the singers are wont to identify the places where the events occurred. The *Douglas Tragedy* took place 'way back in Mutton Hollow', as one old gentleman remembered, through having been aware of it at the time. The notes to Grundtvig's *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* have many such identifications. One can describe, with some accuracy, the Jutish kingdom ruled by Holger the Dane, and defended against Burmand and Diderik. It does not matter that Holger was a figment of a French imagination and the *Douglas Tragedy* an offshoot of the *Edda*; the point is that, as ballads, both were accepted as true. This sort of truth reaches its maximum in the historical pieces, and gives them their special importance. A sturdy and ancient balladry generally springs from a stout historical trunk. When they travel from one land to another, which is but seldom, they go as simple adventures; but at home theirs is a solid veracity, which educates the people. Their tale has a definite importance. To the Castilian they explain the chief mutations of Spanish history: the Moslem conquest, the rivalry of León and Castile, the progress of the reconquest down to its close. The Montenegrin, listening to the heroic story of Kosovo, and comparing it with the songs of outlawry, must have felt something like the exaltation Tennyson attributed to Ulysses:

Though much is taken, much abides; and though  
we are not now that strength which in old days  
moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;  
one equal temper of heroic hearts,  
made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

One need not repeat the demonstration across Europe; nor repeat the words said in a former chapter on the relation between balladry and nationalism. The community is defined and made conscious of itself in the ballads, but not chauvinistic or exclusive. There are, of course, certain simple antitheses which seem inevitable: Christians and Moors, Scots and English, Serbs and Turks, holy Russians and assorted pagans. But though there are enmities taken for granted in the ballads, they are not exacerbated, and as they belong to the order of things, they may pass when the order changes. There is no political programme involved in the definition of the communal personality; the influence of ballads depends on their mirroring, undistorted, truth as that community knows it, both as to facts and as to sentiments.

We must avoid the exaggeration of believing, however, that all the popular mind finds an outlet in ballads. They are a form of literature, though spoken, and they depend on precedent and fashion. In different countries they have arisen at different times, and in those whose ballads are late, we find often restrictions which affect their quality or content. Theirs may be perceptibly more vulgar than those of an older ballad centre, since the working of humanism may be already evident. We note, for instance, the absence of the high heroic vein of Kosovo in Bulgarian balladry; in Bulgaria there are current Serbian ballads of Marko Kraljević, but the native ballads start from the lower level of haiduk song. The Czech ballad of the *Kudrín* cycle is a tavern adventure; we find this tavern level reached in Germany in the songs of lands-knechts and reiters, as a perceptible descent from the knightly level of *Lindenschmid*, which is itself beneath the heroic level of *Kudrín*. In the Ukraine, if we suppose that the Kiev 'byliny' were ever indigenous to the region, there has been a complete change of manner in the lyrical songs of to-day. In Lithuania the ballad is lyrical, with a minimum of narrative, and its themes domestic and sentimental. There are Lithuanian narratives, but their appointed form is the prose Märchen. Convention requires the Frenchman to sing of the 'belle maumariée' and treat marriage as a jest; happy marriage is not non-existent in France, but it is not a subject for song. There is much that is unexpressed in a people's balladry. These songs strike an average of experience, but men are capable of more than the average. The great poets and thinkers are also voices of the peoples, and their highly personal inspirations also

enter into tradition, in a different way, and shape the destinies of the folk. One has only to think of those phrases of the Bible or Shakespeare which leap to the mind and shape our reactions to many situations; no ballad is more omnipresent than they. The traditional ballads of Europe contain less than the full diapason of its peoples' voices; they lack the finer notes together with some of the dominant chords.

When due allowance has been made, however, we return to admire the ballads for their truth and universalism: 'quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus'. They have often descended from older literary works, but they have transformed their models into something more generously human. The traditional epics and the Eddic poems imply a society precisely graded and bound by stiff conventions. We may admire the words of Byrhtwold:

Thought shall be harder, heart the bolder,  
courage the greater, as our might faileth;

but we cannot do so within his own framework of relations proper to lord and vassal. The scaffolding is taken down for ballad poetry. Everything is generalized; there is *the* king and *the* lovers and *the* enemy, and so on for all the typical actors. The situations and emotions are all of the most general sort; such as can be taken for granted. To survive in tradition the ballad must say what every one would feel about situations which any one could expect, and in language that all men understand and use. The complex imaginings of men of letters are thus simplified and universalized in ballads, and new simple themes have been created. The whole mass is direct, fundamental, moving, and vividly suggestive. When men of letters have turned, in these last two centuries, to the ballads for inspiration, they have found suggestions of action and conduct free from cramping conventions and ready to glide into new moulds.

The ballad style is unbound and universal, and the form is singularly free. We cannot weigh and measure texts as we do with written literature, since any given ballad may exist in many divergent texts. The study of variations is of supreme critical importance, and no edition has scholarly value which does not resign the pretension of restoring an archetype. It is not that the different versions are of the same emotional value. Felicity resides in single expressions and specified versions, and the love of ballads is best

fed by selective editions such as the old collectors used to make, and such as Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has offered in the *Oxford Book of Ballads*. Still, the ballad is not to be identified with its happiest examples any more than with some supposititious archetype, for its real life lies inward. It lives in all its variants, exquisite or crude, as an urge and pattern of creation. 'Mens agitat molem.' In some countries, such as Russia, the essential ballad is hard to discern; it is little more than suggestion of adventure and character, a sketch which the singer fills out with his traditional resources. He wishes not to innovate, but to remember; and it is seldom, as Principal Halliday has remarked in the passage quoted above, that any version is through and through admirable. The music falters; it falters and lingers unfinished in the memory, which seeks the chord that would close the song. Ballads are the 'Capelas Imperfeitas', the unfinished chapels, of literature and challenge the great word-builders to complete them. They have been completed by the greatest, who have composed definitive ballad-like poems that no one ventures to refashion; yet the broken accents and lisping charm of the ballads remain, inviting new creation.

Free as the ballads are, however, in content and execution, the Ballad is Form. In some countries this form is precise, invariable, and almost tyrannous. It becomes a metrical pattern, like the Castilian octosyllable, which imposes itself on all sorts of material, extinguishing its predecessors. A country which develops a 'romancero', a corporate sense of its ballads, usually develops a precise metrical and stylistic technique. But apart from this uniformity to the eyes, ballad poetry has its inward formalism. Human life becomes a pattern with an expected design running through; experience has its proper rhythm. The adventure the poet has to relate follows a prescribed course. If it be a Russian adventure, it will as likely as not begin with a feast in Golden Vladimir's court, reaching the point when the guests are flushed with wine, and some hasty words are said which provoke the sally; and then there will always be remembered forms to continue to guide the minstrel in his narrative. You cannot fight any sort of battle in a ballad, but only the ballad-kind of battle:

The first stroke that's given, Sir Aldingar,  
I will give unto thee,  
and if the second give thou may,  
look then thou spare not me.



If one is to be married in Montenegro, the affair must be made to look like bride-stealing; if one scuffles with a Turkish gendarme, he must be a 'black Arapin'.

Wine were drinking two good boon-companions . . .

Wine was drinking Kraljeviću Marko . . .

Wine were drinking three voivods of Serbia . . .

These are the traditional commonplaces, and there are many others. They serve, doubtless, to ease the strain on the reciter's memory and to make fresh composition easy; but they also set the tempo for adventure. The lines are beautiful, or at least efficient, in themselves, and there is no need, nor is it desirable, to invent new expressions for recurring experiences; it would be as unprofitable as to write out in full a recurring decimal. By their recurrence they impose a rhythm on the narrative like that which the Homeric commonplaces give to the *Odyssey*. How much of the charm of the *Odyssey* lies in the inevitable lines: 'thence we sailed yet further with our hearts full of grief, glad to have escaped our death, though with loss of our dear companions'? They are not padding, but the story itself. The joys and sorrows of the home-coming Greeks are shaped to the pattern of the line

So sitting there in order due we smote the sounding furrows.

But the final word must be left to the poets, and their testimony is abundant. The reticence and the frankness of the ballads delight them; the unfinished music echoes in their minds, and they are ever ready

to call up him who left half told  
the story of Cambuscan bold.

They leave their own work rough-hewn, to achieve a like felicity. Since the coming of Romanticism the debt of literature to the ballad has been comparable to that of the Renaissance to the Greek and Latin classics; the Renaissance demanded enrichment of style or thought, Romanticism brought rejuvenation. The reckoning is the same in so many countries that this chapter would become unduly long, and the reader perplexed, if half the items were to be entered. It must suffice to work out, by examples taken here and there, the consequences of two publications: the Antwerp *Cancionero* of circa 1545, and Percy's *Reliques* in 1765.

A stout little volume emerged from the famous press of Plantin at Antwerp, about the year 1545, containing the text of a number of

Spanish ballads. The versions were, for the most part, cut short, since the book would be used as the libretto of polyphonic concerts. The nameless editor could not have anticipated that two other collections would appear, a lustrum later, in Spain, and that his venture would precipitate a landslide ending in the vast *Romancero General*. Nor did it stop there. The work of the sixteenth century was to collect and preserve the traditional poetry in these volumes and on flying leaves, and to augment the mass by verses carved by Timoneda, Sepúlveda, the 'Caesarean Knight', and others from the general chronicles of Spain; but in the last twenty years of that century and the first twenty of the next poets of the highest order adorned and cultivated the genre. Ginés Pérez de Hita poured new wine into old bottles, and fashioned the image of Granadine chivalry, which dazzled Chateaubriand and Washington Irving. Into sentimental ballads Lope de Vega poured his abundant vein; Góngora, more artful, was 'simplex munditiis' in his *Angélica and Medoro* and the *Spaniard in Oran*; Quevedo made the ballad malicious and jocose. With 'romances', 'serranillas' and many kinds of songs, Castilian prosody could not fall entirely under the yoke of Italy. The art forms of the Middle Ages were abandoned readily; but beside those imported by Garcilaso and his successors, there flourished the naïve and spontaneous poetry of the 'romances'. Inspiration and emotion could fill many moulds. Emotion is in constant ebb and flow in the drama, and when this was mirrored by changes of metre in the Lopean Theatre, there were roundels for conversation, and 'romances' for the reports of messengers; there were songs in simple stanzas, and only when the poetic temperature rose steeply was it necessary (and natural) to have recourse to the metres of Italy.

The Lopean Theatre leaned heavily on the ballads, which were the sum of the nation's memories.<sup>1</sup> The national epics, long since extant only in the prose of forgotten chroniclers, survived fragmentarily, but universally, in epical ballads. Ballads of the Carolingian and Arthurian cycles provided Cervantes and Calderón with the better part of their knowledge of chivalry. Ballads of Peter the Cruel outlined the most tragic character known to Spain; those of the Cid distinguished between the self-willed youth and the prudent senior, who were the Don Juan and Don Quixote of

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, *L'Épopée castillane à travers la Littérature espagnole*, Paris, 1910.

the Middle Ages. Frontier ballads, splashed with intense colour, represented the dramatic antithesis of Moors and Christians. Morris ballads, chivalrous and sentimental, expressed the singleness of so many amorous hearts that the sound of

Listen, Zaide, as I advise you,  
don't go strolling down my street

would have prevented any real Zaide from strolling in any of the streets of Madrid. Once Juan de la Cueva had drawn on ballad material, though not ballad style, for his first national drama, the *Siege of Zamora*, the transfusion of ballads into drama proceeded rapidly. Lope de Vega built up an entire dramatic history of Spain from chronicles and ballads, interweaving ballad phrases into his verses in such a way that the original cannot be discerned from the new. He could do so the more readily because the best Castilian ballads cut short the narrative, leaving only the dialogue. The breathless dialogue between Ruy Velázquez and the avenging Mudarra is more dramatic than the more diffuse treatment of the same incident in Lope's *Bastardo Mudarra*. Calderón had not the same appreciation of the epico-dramatic element in balladry; to him ballads seemed to provide a simple conversational metre like the roundel. He slips from one to the other as his topics change. The conversational use of the 'romance' increased so much that Leandro Fernández de Moratín used it as the unique metre of his *Old Man and Girl*, towards the end of the eighteenth century. To do so was a notable impoverishment of the resources of poetical drama, which he abandoned in time; but it was eloquent evidence of the vivacity of ballads.

The ballads of the younger Cid worked over materials taken from the lost epic of the *Mocedades*. The *Mocedades* had spoken of the feud between Diego Laínez and the father of Jimena. The boy Ruy Díaz had taken on himself his father's quarrel, killed the count, and harried the lands and washerwomen of the orphan heiress, until she could see no way of protecting her patrimony save by marrying her invincible enemy. She appealed to the king, and the king commanded the marriage. Ruy Díaz, in his flaming indignation, swore not to honour his wife until he had won five pitched battles, which the straggling epos proceeds to recount. But one of the ballads put a different complexion on the matter. Mindful that Ruy Díaz had been brought up with the Castilian princes

and therefore should hurt none of them, the ballad depicts the Princess Urraca in the act of reproaching him for leading her brother's army against her stronghold of Zamora. Such was their intimacy, she says, that he might have married her and gained high estate, had he not preferred Jimena and wealth. The Cid had chosen Jimena! But if so, the Cid had killed the father of the lady he loved. The ballads do not speak of the conflict between love and honour, but they provide the datum which Guillén de Castro was prompt to seize. His *Mocedades del Cid* is, in places, a cento of ballads, and he is compelled, for verisimilitude, to repeat ballads which are not allied to his main theme. The latter is the conflict of love and honour indicated by the ballad. Honour triumphs speedily in Ruy Díaz, though it tears his heart; for honour was an obligation upon men which could not be gainsaid. With women it was rather different, since their reputation was defended by their males, and only the most virile of women were expected to take up the obligation of washing out dishonour in blood. Jimena is a virile woman; but she is a woman none the less, so that with her after a decent resistance, love prevails. The idea of the drama does not rest, for Spain, in such conflicts. The *Mocedades* was a sport of Castro's peculiar temperament, but in passing into France as *Le Cid* of Corneille the plot, made more intellectual and abstract, resolved itself into the conflict of duties which became the formula of Racinian tragedy.

Cervantes also was a ballad-lover, and in his 'romances' was as near as ever he was to being a poet. He knew no more of the Arthurian legend than three ballads told him; and though he had read Italian epics and Castilian chapbooks full of Carolingian matter, the themes nearest to his mind were those contained in the ballads of the *Marquis of Mantua*, *Durandarte*, *Gaiferos*, and *Montesinos*. What more natural, then, than to sit down and begin a short 'exemplar novel' on the chivalric mania by depicting a country squire riding out to redress wrongs like Ogier from Mantua? It seems only to have been the afterthought that no knight lacked his squire that caused Don Quixote to turn back from his first sally. The Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance returned to the midst of one of those didactic chapters with which Cervantes, the greatest of pedagogues, could not help interlarding his works. A criticism of miscellaneous novels and romances served to deflect the course of the parody; and when Sancho joined his master, their adventure

were patterned on those of *Amadís de Gaula*. The ballads, no longer the main butt of Cervantine irony, persist through the great novel as a lingering echo; and it is out of the ballads that Cervantes fashions the central episode of his Second Part.<sup>1</sup>

Shakespeare, like Cervantes in so many ways, enjoyed his ballad. He quoted

Some men for sudden joy do weep,  
and some in sorrow sing,

from the 'Godly and virtuous song or Ballad made by the constant member of Christ, John Careless, being in prison in the King's Bench for professing His word; who, ending his days therein, was thrown out and buried most ignominiously upon a dunghill, by the adversaries of God's word'. Making the fullest possible use of the amatory, journalistic, satirical, and pious ballads that poured from Elizabethan presses,<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, not having the fortune to be a Scot, rarely laid hands on such fine traditional matter as *Child Roland to the dark tower came*.<sup>3</sup> A mass of traditional and semi-popular poetry was gathered into a folio manuscript during the reign of Charles I, but not published. In 1765 Thomas Percy published extracts from this folio along with Scottish and Northumbrian ballads which were communicated to him, thus suddenly revealing the wealth of the tradition buried under the journeyman productions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The effect was electrical. It was felt first, and most strongly, in Germany, where Hanover was at that time part of the English domain.<sup>4</sup> In the university of Göttingen, Hölty indoctrinated his pupils with a new conception of poetry, basing his style on Percy. This constituted, according to Kayser, 'the foundation of the serious ballad' in Germany, and a coping stone was soon found in Bürger's *Lenore* (1773). Despite the excessive literalness of its opening verses and the sensationalism of its 'hurra, hurra, hopp, hopp, hopp', this transformation of a Low German folk-song under the influence of *Sweet William's Ghost* had no small measure of the forthrightness and vigour of the ballad, together with its atmosphere of super-

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, *Un Aspecto en la elaboración del Quijote*, Madrid, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Sir C. Firth, 'Ballads and Broad-sides', *Essays*, Oxford, 1938; 'Ballads that illustrate Shakespeare', Percy's *Reliques*, Book the Second.

<sup>3</sup> It is an offshoot of the Scandinavian *Rosmer Havmand*.

<sup>4</sup> This matter is fully discussed in W. Kayser, *Geschichte der deutschen Ballade*, Berlin, 1936, and in F. Arnold, *Das deutsche Volkslied*, Prenzlaw, 1927 (4th ed.).

natural dread. *Lenore* 'like wildfire swept across Europe, from Scotland to Poland and Russia, from Scandinavia to Italy'.<sup>1</sup> Bürger devoted himself to the ballad, and drew from his studies far-reaching conclusions. He found in folk-poetry an overflowing of the heart ('Herzensausguss'), needed to redeem German verse from its false erudition. The supreme panacea was contact with nature and the folk; poetry is a gift the poet offers to all men, not merely to an élite. Folk-songs are the essence of poetry, and the more elevated lyrics are justified only when they are 'volkstümlich'. He insisted on the importance of fantasy and invention, and demanded a German collection to be placed on the same shelf as Percy.

The German collection was already in the making, since Goethe, with Herder's encouragement, was busy in Alsace collecting songs and gaining for himself the gift of song. It is because of its characteristic freshness and even naïvety that the German lyric transcends other forms of German literature, and in Goethe, even when most artful, there is a living fountain of spontaneous song. Meanwhile Herder was compiling his *Volkslieder*, issued in 1778-9, and later entitled *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*. The bulk of the book consists of translations from Percy, including some Shakespearian songs, together with Spanish 'romances' of the Morisco type (under Percy's influence) and seven lyrics from Góngora. The German songs of his fifth book are not authentically traditional, but rather showed what might be done in this field with a closer study. The Scandinavian North is represented by Scaldic and Eddic verse, with four Danish 'viser', and there was enough to call attention to the Lithuanian 'dainos' and the 'Morlakian' songs of the Serbs. Seventy ballads on the Cid (*Der Cid nach spanischen Romanzen*, 1805) completed the range of examples on which Herder based his impassioned appeal for a new German poetry. Herder internationalized Percy. The appeal for German verse was splendidly answered by Goethe's *Erlkönig* (based on the Danish *Elveskud*, which is also the source of Leconte de Lisle's *Les Elfes*) and his *König in Thule*. The perfect phrasing of these pieces would not outlive traditional variations, but in every other respect they are ballads: in speed and felicity, abrupt dramatism, and the magic of words unspoken. The honest Schiller was less happy. He aimed at a more elaborate style, in which short narratives taken from

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Robertson, *History of German Literature*, London, 1931, p. 308.

antiquity or more recent eras, received their just rhetorical development. His *Handschuh* is happier than his *Taucher*, since it is the less pompous. The elaboration and theatricality of the latter are an ill-fitting frame for a very simple anecdote. Goethe cast an eye on 'Morlakan' balladry also, and Wilhelm Müller's *Lieder der Griechen* (1821-6) made the style of the 'tragoudia' accessible to Germans.<sup>1</sup>

The appearance of Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* in 1805-8 opened a new era, by giving a greater precision to the notion 'ballad'. Despite a few foreign pieces like *Herr Olof* (*Elveskud* again), the collection is genuinely German. Herder and Goethe's internationalism has gone, and in its place there are a greater number of traditional German songs, with fewer erudite intrusions. The emphasis is on narrative. The *Wunderhorn* thus comes to define the notion 'Ballade', as a short narrative poem touched with lyrical imagination, and so distinct from the purely narrative 'Romanze'. A third term, 'Lied', indicated a third traditional influence on the German artistic lyric. The influence of Brentano and Arnim was all the more effective as, like Scott and Almeida Garrett, they were not primarily concerned to produce faithful texts. Their pieces had the simplicity of ballads, without their imperfections. Thus a schism arose between the reconstructed and the palaeographic way of presenting this matter, like that which had already arisen with Ritson in England. The demands of scholars were more exacting, especially after Grundtvig's great Danish collection began to appear, and the critical style of editing appears tentatively in Uhland, to be confirmed by Erk, Böhme, Liliencron, John Meier. On the other hand, the ballad as poetry has descended through Uhland and Heine to Blunck in our own age. Uhland's *Balladen und Romanzen*, mostly composed between 1805 and 1815, were of a more pronounced narrative cast than those of Goethe, more objective and dispassionate. They do not sing themselves so well, but they have learned to avoid the sensationalism of Schiller. The styles employed are the lyrical narrative and the straight narrative, the latter without any second intention. It is in supplying this second intention, in *Die spanischen Atreiden* and other pieces, that Heine raises the 'Romanze' to its height of perfection. Under the surface of a

<sup>1</sup> A convenient anthology illustrating these points is J. T. Hatfield's *German Lyrics and Ballads*, New York, 1900, 1924.

narrative, apparently of the strictest neutrality, Heine clears a channel for his lambent irony. The poem and its congeners are not 'volkstümlich'; it is not right that poetry not destined for traditional preservation should ape all the characteristics of the traditional style. There must be a new creation into something better and more definitive, whether in form or intention. Heine discovered that the neutral manner of the 'Romanze' is unrivalled as a means of letting the terrible things about men and life express themselves. More recently, G. Duhamel has done the same. Tormented by the sight of useless suffering in the military hospitals he frequented during the War, Duhamel could find no epithets or rhetoric which did not diminish the horror of the real thing. The stark objectivity of his couplets in the *Ballade of Florentin Prunier*,<sup>1</sup> without ornament or sentimental disguise, rivets our horrified gaze on the tragedy itself. Any adjectivation would have afforded a relief which the poet was determined to refuse. So too with Heine, though he is more prone to disgust than to horror. In Heine, on the other hand, pure song reaches a second perfection, as in his *Pine and Palm*, inspired by similar allegorical folk-songs about trees.

It is not capricious to take Germany on our road to considering the effect of Percy on English poets, since our Romantics were affected by the German enthusiasm. Southey saw in *The Ancient Mariner* a 'Dutch attempt at German sublimity'—to such an extent had a sublimity characteristically English (or rather Scottish) come to appear German. Scott, though he collected the *Border Minstrelsy*, was also the translator of Bürger's *Lenore*, Goethe's *Erkönig*, and the traditional *Sempach* and *Moringen*. It was as a collector and imitator of ancient ballads that Scott set up business as a man of letters, developing thence into an author of 'lays', and so into a novelist; but the incidental verses in the novels show that he had not lost his first love. If the ballads have, in a measure, suggested the historical novel, they also, in another measure, initiated the Romantic revival of the lyric. The *Lyrical Ballads* owe little to specific folk-songs, but they aim at attaining two of the excellences to be found in balladry: the imaginative presentation of ordinary experience, and the humanizing of the supernatural. The influence of individual pieces is much less in England than in Germany, though one may mention Lockhart's renderings of

<sup>1</sup> *Élégies*, 1920. M. Duhamel mentioned these poems to me himself.



Spanish 'romances', Byron's *Alhama*, and Arnold's *Forsaken Mer-man*. The ballad manner has been imitated, at a distance from the authentic style as revealed by Child, in Campbell's political odes (notably *Hohenlinden*), Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* and *Revenge*, Macaulay's *Armada* (and Chesterton's *Lepanto*), and Kipling's barrack-room ditties. Swinburne is an unexpected example to the contrary effect. It is hard to imagine any style more remote from the plain-speaking ballad manner, yet Swinburne is very closely attentive to ballad form in such pieces as *After Death* and *The Sea-swallows*, while in *Laus Veneris* he inserts a paraphrase of *Tannhäuser*:

Then came each man and worshipped at his knees  
 who in the Lord God's likeness bears the keys  
     to bind or loose, and called on Christ's shed blood,  
 and so the sweet-souled father gave him ease.

But when I came I fell down at his feet,  
 saying, 'Father, though the Lord's blood be right sweet,  
     the spot it takes not off the panther's skin,  
 nor shall an Ethiop's stain be bleached with it.

'Lo, I have sinned and have spat out at God,  
 wherefore his hand is heavier and his rod  
     more sharp because of mine exceeding sin,  
 and all his raiment redder than bright blood

'Before mine eyes; yea, for my sake I wot  
 the heat of hell is waxen seven times hot  
     through my great sin.' Then spake he some sweet word,  
 giving me cheer; which thing availed me not,

Yea, scarce I wist if such indeed were said;  
 for when I ceased—lo, as one newly dead  
     who hears a great cry out of hell, I heard  
 the crying of his voice across my head.

'Until this dry shred staff, that hath no whit  
 of leaf or bark, bear blossom and smell sweet,  
     seek thou not any mercy in God's sight,  
 for so long shalt thou be cast out from it.'

In French literature it is possible to make a case for the interest of poets from an early epoch in the 'chanson populaire';<sup>1</sup> but the

<sup>1</sup> De Beaurepaire-Froment, *Bibliographie des Chants populaires français*, Paris, 1910, gives quotations from authors ranging from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

consequences of the ballad revival for nineteenth-century literature are less important than in Germany or England. There is, of course, the exuberant Hugo. He has his *Odes et Ballades*, of which the fifteen poems under the latter title are neither ballades nor ballads, but rhetorical lyrico-narratives in Victor Hugo's own manner. *La Chasse du Burgrave*, a tale cast in the mould of the Renaissance echo songs, even inspired some hesitation in its author, as being perhaps 'somewhat too Gothic in form'. *Les Orientales* (1829) contains matter more to our purpose. Dedicated to the cause of Greek independence, these pieces mention Botzaris and other heroes whose feats are celebrated in 'tragoudia', and, after Byron, he retails the Mazeppa legend, for which there are popular parallels in the Ukraine. The direct imitation of ballads, however, is limited to *La Bataille perdue* and *Romance mauresque*, both of them offerings on the altar of his peculiar devotion to Spain. The former is the ballad on King Roderick's defeat, made more rhetorical; the latter is a flaccid version of the dramatic ballad of Mudarra's vengeance. The savagely intense Castilian song has been converted into an arabesque, and the local colour is so thickly splashed that it sometimes cries out. At least to a Spanish ear it must seem strange that Mudarra, 'who commands a frigate of the Moorish king Aliatar', should have been chased from Alba to Zamora in the central Meseta. The devotion of Gérard de Nerval to the 'chanson populaire' was both more national and more natural than this. But in France, as in England, there is one surprise. Leconte de Lisle<sup>1</sup> exercised his Parnassian genius for pure form on the matter of the Danish *Elveskud*, the Swedish *Sorrow's Might* (*Christine*) and half a dozen Castilian 'romances'.<sup>2</sup> From these 'rudes poésies', as Vianey dubs them, the Parnassian could learn little but his own doctrine of objectivity; apart from that, their contents were mere raw materials, on a par with Greek myths and Vedic hymns. They gave him, however, the vigour and initiative which throbs beneath the classic perfection of his polish.

In Spain the 'romance' flourished among poets once its prestige abroad was sufficiently understood. It produced an offshoot, the

<sup>1</sup> J. Vianey, *Les Sources de Leconte de Lisle*, Montpellier, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> From Damas Hinard, *Romancero général*, Paris, 1844. The poems are *La Tête du Comte*, based on the Cid's vengeance for his father, *Ximena*, *L'Accident de Don Iñigo* (also a Cid ballad), *Les Inquiétudes de Don Simuel*, *La Romance de Don Fadrique*, and *La Romance de Doña Blanca*.

'leyenda'. The 'legend' is a poem in ballad lines, but of a more definite structure; it differs from true ballads chiefly in the eagerness to give 'local colour', which the traditional ballad always takes for granted. Other countries with rich balladries inevitably show signs of their influence. A bird's-eye view of that aspect of Danish literature can be obtained readily in anthologies or by scanning the works of Oehlenschläger.<sup>1</sup> In Serbia we have the poems of Njegoš and adaptations of the 'junačke pesme' like Stojković's *Lazarica*. The publication of folk-songs opened a new epoch in both the poetry and the music of Hungary, while in the Baltic states they revealed the very possibility of a literature inspired by national sentiment. We must pass over these things, which would delay our discussion too long; but we must not pass over the case of Russia, both because its novelists have raised its literature to the front rank, and because the history of ballad influences has run a peculiar course.<sup>2</sup> The impulse came at first from abroad, chiefly from Germany. The first of the ballads was actually the Castilian *Guarinos*, translated by Karamzin in 1789, and published in 1792; but the most potent single influence was certainly Bürger's *Lenore*. *Lenore* appeared as the *Ljudmila* of Žukovskii in 1808, and as his *Svetlana* in 1813; as Katenin's *Ol'ga* in 1816 (a plain translation) and Lermontov's *Ljubov' mertveca* in 1840; while Anna Turčaninova rendered into Russian our *Margaret's Ghost* (*Vil'jam i Margarita*) in 1800. Percy's *Reliques* offered to Russian poets the themes of *Edward* and the *Three Ravens*. In addition to these sources, Goethe's *Erkönig* and *König in Thule* were well known, along with Schiller, Heine, Scott, and Campbell. Herder's *Cid* provided Spanish information, and there was direct contact with Denmark and also with Greece (Maïkov's *Bořba so smert'ju*, the Greek battle of Digenis and Charon). Russian prosody was settled on the basis of rhyme and measured lines, and Russian taste educated in western types of balladry before the revelation by Rybnikov and Gil'ferding of the rich store of indigenous 'byliny'. In the earlier period the matter of Kiev is deemed either comic or more appropriate to prose genres. It is thus only at a comparatively late moment that the Russian 'byliny' come into their own

<sup>1</sup> The *Oxford Book of Scandinavian Verse* unfortunately omits the 'viser'. The comparison can be made on consulting O. Vig, *Sange og Rim*, Christiania, 1854.

<sup>2</sup> F. W. Neumann, *Geschichte der russischen Ballade*, Königsberg und Berlin, 1937.

kingdom, with Aleksei Tolstoi's *Aljoša Popovič* and *Sadko* (1872). By contrast, Puškin had much earlier drawn on Ukrainian songs for his *Kozak* (1814), and the music of the Russian folk has been employed by Mussorgskii, Rimskii-Korsakov, and Borodin. There is perhaps a closer affinity between the gorgeously extravagant 'byliny' and opera librettos, than with the more disciplined taste of modern poetry. If that be so, the apotheosis of the genre is Borodin's *Sadko*, where the most musically worded of 'byliny' becomes opera.

The past tense has been used so often in these pages that it may be supposed the ballads have no present. The present day is analytical and introspective; it has had a surfeit of romantic spontaneity and would willingly reimpose the criterion of poetic artifice. An example may suggest that the broken arches of the ballads will bear the new superstructures we would like to rear on them. It is the Spanish *Count Arnaldos*. Count Arnaldos, strolling along the sea-shore one midsummer morning, saw a wonderful boat approaching and heard its steersman singing a song which brought the birds to rest on the mast-head and the fish to swim on the crests of the waves. Deeply moved the Count cried out:

'In the name of God, I pray you,  
teach me, shipman, what you sing.'

But the steersman would not; the ballad breaks off abruptly. What was that song? Longfellow's answer is: *The Secret of the Sea*—

'Wouldst thou', so the helmsman answered,  
'learn the secret of the sea?  
Only those who brave its dangers  
comprehend its mystery?'

The answer was worthy of a New Englander, with the hardy sailors of the clippers for his compatriots. Azorín, in *Al Margen de los Clásicos*, is content with hints. He says that the sailor's voice 'speaks of contentment, enfranchisement, geniality, health, hope'; it may be he comes from beyond the infinite and stormy ocean to lead us to dreamlands of illusion. I do not know whether A. E. Housman had read the Spanish ballad or Longfellow's or Flecker's rendering.<sup>1</sup> He used, however, exactly the same picture to dash our hopes of an answer. The time is evening; the place a headland in

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Poems*, London, 1935 ('Lord Arnaldos'): a direct translation.

Biscay. The poet is not alone, but accompanied by Grief. The rest is in conformity with the tradition. The ship is of gold—

gold of mast and gold of cordage,  
gold of sail to sight was she;—

lacking the softness of silk which mitigates the gold in Spanish.  
The sailor, too, has lost the magic of Arion and Orpheus, but comes a-hailing:

On the golden deck the steersman  
standing at the helm of gold.  
Man and ship and sky and water  
burning in a single flame;  
and the mariner of Ocean  
he was calling as he came:  
from the highway of the sunset  
he was shouting on the sea,  
'Landsman of the land of Biscay,  
have you help for grief and me?'  
When I heard I did not answer,  
I stood mute and shook my head:  
son of earth and son of Ocean,  
much we thought and nothing said.  
Grief and I abode the nightfall;  
to the sunset grief and he  
turned them from the land of Biscay  
on the waters of the sea.

(*Last Poems*, London, 1936.)

## BOOK II

### BALLADS IN PARTICULAR

#### I

#### ROMANCE BALLADS

##### 1. *France, Provence, North Italy, and Brittany*

THE ballad in France is the narrative aspect of lyrical poetry. It has no form of its own nor does it make a corpus to which the word *Romancéro* (borrowed from Spain) might justly be applied. The narrative pieces merge into the more general 'chansons populaires', from which, except when borrowing from abroad has taken place, they are scarcely distinguishable. Lyrical effusions arose from situations which were constantly repeated—an encounter with a shepherdess, amorous intrigue, separation and reunion—and these situations required some words of introduction. They are not domestic and personal; they do not, as in Lithuania, follow a girl through the ritual prescribed by custom for each stage in her development. On the contrary, the matter of the 'chanson populaire' is the same set of conventions which occurs in the literate effusions of the troubadours and trouvères. Contact with written songs is felt in all the folk-songs of France in a greater or less degree; there is no possibility of setting a dividing line between the literate and the oral. What we possess of the latter is more recent in date than the former, and we need not hesitate to suppose that it is modelled on the conventions of the courtly poets. The troubadours, however, had their antecedents, which are unknown to us. About the year 1100 there was a quickening of the spirit along the dividing line between the 'langue d'oc and the 'langue d'oïl', and Provençal poetry burst into green leaf and full bloom. The causes of this sudden efflorescence are still concealed. What is certain is that the Provençal lyric appears at once with an elaborate technique and equipment of conventions, far removed from any poetry that might be called primitive. On the other hand, long before 1100 we read of the choric songs of rustic women, either for mere entertainment or on some momentous occasion. They perplexed the pious by their 'diabolic songs', though doubtless innocent enough, from the sixth century

onward. So little is known of their themes and style that the citations serve equally well to supply the prehistory of the epic, ballad, and lyric genres. The repertoire must have been created and preserved orally, and must have exercised some influence on subsequent artistic poetry. It was an oral, traditional literature of women; sung by women and doubtless shaped for them. When the lyric at last appears in written form, the predominance of women's interests is strongly marked, though the poets are men. This preponderance descends throughout all French literature, and has spread from there into the other literatures of Europe.

Love is the single chord of the modern lyric, and woman the focus of attraction. Other themes arise in literate verse, though always in a minority of examples; but in the folk-song the other interests, apart from religious and drinking songs, are so few as to be negligible. The chief distinction of types is according as we picture the women dancing or sitting over their embroidery. The former gives the dancing-songs ('chansons à danser'), equipped with refrains which the dancers, halting, could sing in chorus; the latter gave the ancient 'chansons de toile', for which, more recently, scholars have preferred the enigmatic term 'complaintes'. The 'complainte' is without refrain, and is sung by a soloist, not a precentor and chorus. The word covers, more or less adequately, many different types of songs named from the convention which they employed: there are 'pastourelles' or 'bergeries', songs of the faithless wife or 'chansons de mal mariées', 'reverdies' in which mention is made of the viridescence of Spring, songs of villeins, songs addressing the nightingale (rossignolet) as the messenger of love, songs beginning with the mention of some female operation, &c. These conventions, as they affected the semi-popular poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, are seen exploited in Bartsch's collection of *Romances et Pastourelles*.<sup>1</sup> The doubt arises whether many of the pieces have been preserved traditionally. Mere anonymity is no proof; the output of the named poet Audefroï le Bâtard is noticeably more popular in tone than much of the anonymous verse. It is not the single poems which need be supposed traditional, but the types; types which are repeated not only 'ad nauseam' in the French song-books, but also in all the balladries of western Europe.

<sup>1</sup> Leipzig, 1870.

They are the moulds and patterns of traditional narrative lyrics in many lands. The 'pastourelle' opens with a glimpse of the knight or squire riding along some particular stretch of road:

'Twixt Arras and Douay  
outside Gravelle,  
I, riding on my way,  
found Perrennelle.

He makes his offers of love; the shepherdess pertly replies. He presses his suit, and she yields or evades him, or, in songs which may be supposed to appeal to the vulgar, calls in some villeins to beat the gentleman off. Sometimes the damsel tricks him into doing a service, such as killing a wolf, and repays him with no more than good words; at others she frightens him or holds him off until it is too late, and then mocks him for not taking advantage of his chances. The early songs were satisfied with these personages; but in the fifteenth century and later it was licit to mark the lady's lowly status by assigning to her a trade, as in *La Belle Barbière*. In French verse and prose, as distinct from French life, courtship and marriage are treated in a lightly sardonic vein, and infidelity is accepted as the norm. Here enters the vast tribe of 'chansons de la mal mariée'. Married to a rich, twisted old man who is impotent in love, or to a boor who beats them, the young matrons are advised by servants and friends to look for a young lover; they complain to some sympathetic squire, give assignations, open their windows or a side door at night, exult in infidelity and defy the consequences. To be a nun is, from the standpoint of popular verse, to be unhappily unwed; we have therefore the frequent pattern of the nun who laments her solitude. The dawn-song or 'aubade' is yet another form of the same convention. It is because the lady is already ill-matched that dawn forces the lovers to separate. The convention is complete in all its details: the birds' songs announce the dawn or the watchman blows his trumpet, the lovers complain that the night has been short, and they abuse 'the jealous one'—the unfortunate husband. In Spain the dawn breaks and brings ingenuous lovers together; but that is not the convention of the 'aubade' nor of the German 'Tageslied'. *Tannhäuser*, the *Noble Moringer*, and the *Pyramus* ballad are notable instances of songs cast in a traditional mould formed in France.



The 'reverdies' are less apt to give narrative details. They are characterized by the beginnings only:

In the fresh sweet month of May,  
when the fields are green and gay,  
beneath a bush I heard a tale  
sung me by a nightingale.

*Saderala bon!*

How sweet to slumber on  
beneath the bushes in the dale.

(Bartsch 27.)

There follows an idyllic scene of a pretty girl in a garden talking to the nightingale, and perhaps also to thrush, finch, lark, and merlin:

and other birds, the shrubs within,  
heard I singing in their Latin.

(Bartsch 30 a.)

It was not so much in the lyrics as in the epics that there developed a conventional description of the coming of Spring which has circulated to other parts of Europe. Spring, for the epic minstrel, is the season when kings go forth to war; he feels it must be duly marked. An order of development was established and used with permissible variations: the grass grows green, buds appear, birds build nests, bulls and horses frisk, and the lover seeks his lass. The gambit may be raised to exquisite poetry, as by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales*, or left in its significant simplicity, as in the Castilian ballad of *The Month of May*; the order and details are respected. The convention spreads as far as Greece, where the modern *Swallow Song* is of this type (a description of the burgeoning of nature). In the Ukraine the Spring song (vesna) is an established type of folk-song, but the details are adapted to the severer conditions of a Russian spring. The part allotted to the birds of love makes the 'rossignolet' a synonym for the lover. From this point it is a short step to the delightful little allegories we find in German traditional poetry (*Vogelhochzeit*).

The narrative lyrics of Audefroï le Bâtard are especially rich in traditional themes worked out in a semi-popular style. By feigning death *Belle Ysabiaus* contrives to join Gérard; the theme is much used in later balladry, and the device seems to be Italian in origin. *Belle Ydoine* is an imprisoned princess, rescued by her lover Count Garsile; this is the later *Pernette*. *Belle Béatrice* was snatched from

an unwelcome bridegroom by Hugues, a young Lochinvar; *Belle Argentine*, as sorely abused as any medieval wife and mother, was justified at long last. The Count de la Marche exploits the theme of the 'shepherdess of joyous heart' who mocks the timid gallant:

Oh how much of worth you miss,  
since without one little kiss  
I've eluded you!

(Bartsch III. iii.)

Anonymous tales of this sort open Bartsch's collection. *Belle Erembors* resumes her old affair with Raynaud; *Belle Aiglentine* is rewarded for her true love to Count Henry by marriage; *Belle Doette* hears that Doon is dead, refuses a comforter, and enters a nunnery (*Marlbrough s'en va en guerre* is the same story in another style, and the various tests of ladies' faithfulness may be expansions of the same theme). There are encounters at fountains and any number of 'mal mariées'. Different in style from what are later admitted to be 'chansons populaires', more literary and perhaps set to more intricate music, these poems contain the seed of many future ballad developments in Spain, England, Holland, and Germany.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, perhaps due to an uprush of national and popular sentiment at the close of the Hundred Years' War,<sup>1</sup> a current set in in favour of simplicity of music and rhythm, and we encounter for the first time poems of the same texture as those preserved in actual oral tradition.

Ballads and rondeaux give way gradually to livelier and lighter pieces. To pompous and precious phrases more natural and realistic turns and expressions are preferred. The style of composers also changes: compositions for voices accompanied by instruments no longer predominate; the vocal *a capella* style is established with Ockeghem and his school. In the sixteenth century, in particular, the form is simplified, and, perhaps under the influence of the Italian *frottola*, lyrics approximate to the forms of the popular dances, or even to the songs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup>

This simplification of style is applied, characteristically in France, to artistic lyrics. There remains the same doubt as before concerning the traditional nature of a large part of the albums in which

<sup>1</sup> In several songs (as *Le Capitaine et la Belle*) the villain is an Englishman.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Gérold, *Chansons populaires des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Bibliotheca Romanica, 190-2), Strasbourg, n.d., p. vii.

these simple songs occur; and there is no absolute line of division between the literate and the oral styles. Certain forms define themselves for the first time, and their spread reveals the community of France, Provence, North Italy, and the older Catalan stratum in respect of subject and technique. An important group of sources for our knowledge of the 'chanson populaire' is constituted by song-books printed in northern Italy during the earlier years of the sixteenth century; notably O. Petrutius's *Harmonice musices Odhecaton* (Venice, 1504). This new manner is more closely defined by the fact that it takes no account of the innovations due to humanism. Humanistic lyrics have attained a real popularity of their sort, but they have not entered, nor are suited to enter into oral tradition; and consequently collections made in the nineteenth century show no such admixture in the 'chanson populaire'.<sup>1</sup>

There is a considerable variety of stanzas employed by the 'chanson populaire', but some simple types are of special importance. The poems may be divided into 'chansons à danser' and 'complaintes', according as they have refrains and are suited to choric performance with a precentor, or are fit for recitative singing only. What seems the older and simpler manner may be represented in this translation of *La Perronnelle*, one of the most popular of all such songs:

Haven't you seen Miss Perronnelle  
whom the troops have ta'en away?

They've bedecked her like a page boy:  
'tis to pass through Dauphiné.

Now she had three loving brothers,  
who have gone to seek that may,  
and they've sought her and they've found her  
by a fount in a meadow gay.

'God be with you, Perronnelle!  
Please come home with us to-day.'

'O no, no, my bonny brothers,  
never to France return I may.

But commend me to my father  
and my mother dear, I pray.'

(Paris et Gevaert, xxxix.)

<sup>1</sup> See Note D, at the end of the book.

There is assonance in the alternate lines, and it is a rule that the cadences of the two lines making the couplet must be different (in this case feminine endings, followed by masculine endings with the rhyming word). Doncieux has preferred to arrange these pieces, therefore, in long lines, so as to allow the assonances to follow at the end of each long line, making a tirade. Nigra in Piedmont and Milá y Fontanals in Catalonia have adopted the same arrangement. The rule is then given that the hemistichs of a traditional line must have different cadences. An appeal to music shows that there are phrases for each line, which might justify the arrangement adopted in the translation; but it also shows that these songs have a different form as sung from that which they appear to bear as read. *La Perronnelle* is sung as a quatrain, with musical phrases arranged as  $a\beta aa'$ . The use of nonsense refrains in the dancing songs, and the repetition of the single lines or hemistichs, gives to some pieces quite an elaborate stanzaic form as sung. The almost equally popular *La Pernette* has a tune arranged as  $a\xi\xi'a\beta\gamma\beta$ ; the first line is sung, then the nonsense refrain, then the first repeated, and the second sung three times over, using a different musical phrase the second time.

Whether these poems be composed in long divided lines or in couplets may be open to doubt; but they are in effect related as couplets to the slightly later quatrain style. The quatrain is rarely used for dancing, and is more appropriate for narrative. The rhymes are frequently arranged in the simplest manner ( $aabb$ ), and the music in four phrases ( $a\beta\gamma\delta$ ). This is the metre of *Jean Renaud*, *King Loys' Daughter*, *La Belle Barbière*, *The Torch of Love*, *The Drowned Diver*, and other famous narrative songs, a notable proportion of which must be considered importations into France from Germany, the Netherlands, and even Scandinavia. A genuinely French song, *The Sheep saved from the Wolf* (which is one of the mocking 'pastourelles') arranges its rhymes alternately ( $abab$ ), and observes the rule as to change of cadence; this rule, however, does not generally affect the poems in quatrains. There is a tendency for poems in couplets to pass into quatrains, as one may note in comparing *La Perronnelle* with its derivative *Fanchon*, or *the Girl and the Dragoon*. Yet the couplet remained alive, and as late as 1781 was the form taken by the highly popular song about Marlborough.

The French *Romancéro*, as arranged by Doncieux, is poor in

historical matter. The oldest event recorded is to be found in *The Hanged Scholars*. It is the foundation legend of the Hôtel-Dieu at Pontoise, built by St. Louis from the fine paid by Enguerrand de Coucy in 1259; he hanged three scholars of St. Nicholas's Abbey, Laon, who had hunted in his forest. The facts correspond to those of a Dutch and German ballad, *My Lord of Brunswick and the little Boy*. In the French ballad the crime is inspired by the more convenient theme of amatory intrigue, as in our ballad of *The Clerk's Two Sons of Oxenford* (Child 11). It is not certain at what time the ballad arose, since the legend would always be available at Pontoise. In some details, perhaps by chance, the piece resembles the High German *Castle in Austria*, which is of the fifteenth century. The word Pontoise was, in the course of tradition, replaced by Toulouse, and it is under this style that it spreads to North Italy and Catalonia (Nigra 4 and Milá 208). Sometime before the return of François I to Paris (17th March 1526) from his captivity in Madrid, a ballad was composed, not wholly in his favour. It spread later to Italy, where the imprisonment of Louis XVI seemed a sufficiently close analogue to justify the change of names. It is one of several ballads inspired by the fight at Pavia in the imagination of the contestants. The Spaniards remember the victory in a prosy and circumstantial piece which gives credit above all to Antonio de Leiva. To the Germans it seemed rather an opportunity for exalting the prowess of the landsknechts against their professional rivals, the Swiss pikemen; their hero is Georg von Frundsberg. So, though one event has had ballad consequences in different countries, Pavia illustrates the truth that historical ballads seldom travel beyond the frontiers of a single homogeneous ballad area. It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to encounter in Germany a version of the French *Poisoned Marchioness*, complete with tune, which gives voice to the suspicion that Henry IV's mistress Gabrielle d'Estrées was poisoned in 1599. The *English Marriage* refers to Henrietta Maria's marriage in 1625; but the celebrated *Marlbrough s'en va en guerre*, which has spread to Germany, Italy, Catalonia, the Asturias, and Portugal since 1781, has no more connexion with our general than the name. The story is that his death was reported to his faithful wife—which is the old plot of *Belle Doette*. The tune (a singularly sprightly one) may have been used for a hunting song in the seventeenth century. A comparison with other collections

does not increase the historical content of French balladry, though there are allusions in plenty to English ravages in our losing fight to retain a hold on France in the fifteenth century. The death of Olivier Basselin (c. 1450) and the misconduct of Louis XI's garrisons (c. 1465) are also mentioned, and serve to confirm the general period assigned to this later medieval phase of popular poetry.

Doncieux prints seven religious pieces, but the bulk of his collection consists of amatory adventures, which can be grouped round the name of the heroine. Some of these ascend to the fifteenth century, and were then already welcomed by many. There is the brief *Perronnelle*, already mentioned, which was later transformed into *The Girl and the Dragoon*. It is really a professional song of the troops, like the late pieces, *The Jolly Drummer* and *The Soldier-Husband's Return*. Sailors also have their ballads: *The Embarkation of the Singing Girl*, *The Corn Ship*, and above all *The Short Straw*. It would be convenient to place the origin of this piece on the coasts of Normandy or Brittany, whence it would radiate outward to Provence, Catalonia, and Portugal on the one side, and to Scandinavia and England on the other. There seems, however, to be no reason other than geographical probability for placing this ballad to the credit of a French minstrel. Thackeray has used it in his *Little Billee*, which one would reckon as a jocose ballad of the period of decadence, despite the respectability of its authorship. Similarly there is a professional element in *La Belle Barbière*, *The Orange Girl*, and *The Orange Seller*. Outside Doncieux's collection we find a strong tendency to connect ballads of the sixteenth century with the professions. The composer gives his or her status by way of signature in the last verse. The practice extended to Germany, and was normal in landsknecht and reiter ballads which purport to convey information about contemporary events. We have the ballad of *Sickingen*, for instance, on the authority of a landsknecht who had just come (to somewhere unnamed) from Landstuhl, after witnessing the hero's fall. Ballads about prisoners, the *Prisoners of Nantes* and *Pierre de Grenoble*, are, if not professional, at least of interest to a peculiar social class.

There remain a few songs which deal ingenuously with love (*Les Princesses au Pommier doux* and *Claire Fontaine*) or with lovers' tragedies. In *The Hapless Marriage*, the lovers, separated by the

force of their parents' will, die together in church. The theme is too simple to be located in any one country. Scarcely more developed is *Beau Robert* (not in Doncieux), the youth who returns to find his fiancée dead and passionately addresses her corpse on the bier. *She who feigned death to guard her honour*, or to avoid a distasteful marriage, is another well-known ballad theme. The fondness shown by Italian novelists for this motif of apparent death, either as an effort of will or under the influence of some narcotic, is so pronounced that one is inclined to assign the germ of all such tales to Italy. Feigning death to avoid a distasteful marriage is the motif of the English *Gay Goshawk* (Child 96), the Serbian *Erceg Stepan*, and other poems discussed in Chapter VI of the First Book. It is used in *King Loys' Daughter*, perhaps as an afterthought. The ballad is one of a pair. A princess, in love with a gentleman of low degree but high merits, is prevented from marrying him either by her own imprisonment, as in *King Loys' Daughter* and the older *Belle Ydoine*, or by his imprisonment and execution, as in *La Pernelle* and *La Belle se sied au pied de la tour* (which is the more lyrical variant of *La Pernelle*). In the former case a happy ending arises either by the lady's escape, through feigned death or some other show of ready wit, or by the lover's valour; in the latter there may also be a happy ending, but a more usual conclusion is that the lovers should die and flowers or trees intertwine above their graves. Both stories are represented in the Castilian pseudo-Carolingian cycle of *Count Claros of Montalbán*, and the latter in *Conde Olinos*. As for *The Swine Girl* (*La Porcheronne*), which has a wide European range, the chief reason for considering it French in origin is a tradition which links it with the name of Guilhem de Beaucaire.

There are a number of pieces in Doncieux's collection which show that, however much other nations have owed to suggestions from French literature, the narrative ballad in France is largely due to a reflux from abroad. Movements within the Franco-Italian area itself are only to be expected. Provence is the focus of *L'Escriveta*, which has spread to northern France and to Catalonia. From Italy came *Dame Lombarde*, the poisoner theme, *The Drowned Diver*, and probably *Marianson's Rings*. The first is the history of Rosmunda and Helmichis, probably excavated by some felicitous poet from Paulus Diaconus. The diver was Cola Pesce who lost his life diving for the amusement of the Emperor

Frederic II. The range of this story is from France to Greece, with Schiller's *Der Taucher* as an offshoot. It is not easy to determine where it was first made a ballad; it may even have been excavated from Belleforest in the sixteenth century. As for *Marianson's Rings*, the priority of Boccaccio's use of the motif in the *Decameron* (ii. 9) is undoubted; but again there is no clear indication as to where it first took ballad form.

From the Low Countries came the Holofernes ballad of *Renaud the Woman-Killer* and the Leander song called by Doncieux *The Torch of Love*. The soldier's return home, which has already been mentioned, is either a fresh creation on a commonplace event, or a worn-down variant of the *Moringer* ballad. Somewhat more travelled are the pieces entitled *Marguerite or the White Beast*, *Belle Hélène or the Dancing Girl who was drowned*, and *King Renaud or Jean Renaud*. They are all Scandinavian: the first is a tale of bewitchment; the second belongs to the cycle of the nixes; the third is an offshoot of *Elveskud*. It lacks the beginning—the encounter between the hero and the elf-woman—and so is less perfect than the corresponding Breton poem of *Count Nann*. For this reason, no doubt, Doncieux considered that the Breton piece must have intervened between the French and the Danish; and that may have been the case. The evidence as to tunes does not wholly confirm this opinion. Child reproduces two variants of one tune in connexion with his *Clerk Colvill*, and it is clear that they are versions of the melodies A, B, and C in the *Udvalgte Danske Folkeviser* of Abraamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek (vol. v, melodies for No. 35). A fourth tune, recorded by Kristensen from oral tradition in 1891, differs considerably from these, but it is not unlike that which Bujeaud found circulating in the Angoumois. There is also an enigmatic Catalan tune, which might be associated with either of these patterns. The Breton melody also might be of Scandinavian origin. On the other hand, the bulk of the melodies current in France are of quite a different sort. They adopt various equivalents of the melodic formula 72D, which is the one actually chosen for reproduction in Doncieux's *Romancéro*. I have encountered what appear to be analogues of this type only in Czechoslovakia; if the connexion be genuine, then it suggests that the prevalent French tune is more recent than those of Angoumois and Catalonia, and is an intruder, perhaps from Germany. It would not be at all surprising that the oldest and correct melody should be the one



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with least support.<sup>1</sup> *La mal mariée vengée par ses frères*, which Arbaud entitled *Clotildo*, is more likely to be a derivative of the German cycle of *Kudrîn* ballads than an historical notice of the sorrows of a Merowing princess.

The ballads of northern Italy belong to the same group as those of France and Provence: they have the same form, many of the same subjects, and a related language.<sup>2</sup> The Maritime Alps are not a linguistic obstacle, and the changes which mark the difference between French and Italian take place so gradually that a traveller would not be able to encounter a fixed frontier in all the distance from the Alps to the Apennines.<sup>3</sup> The Franco-Italian ballad area, however, extends only to the limits of Cisalpine Gaul, not on account of the Celtic substratum of the Gauls, but partly for political reasons and partly through opposition to the 'lingua toscana'. This tongue—standard literary Italian—is not identical with the speech of any particular place, even of Florence. It has always been, to some extent, a convention of educated men, a 'volgare illustre'; and since the middle years of the thirteenth century it has been the vehicle of a rich and brilliant literature. This literature, and the whole culture it implies, has enthralled Central Italy, leaving to the dialects a restricted field of peasant improvisations; it is only in regions linguistically and (at one time) politically remote that original creation in the local speech has found room to develop. The Sicilian dialect in the far south supports a flourishing balladry, though even this has been influenced by, or modelled on, the Tuscan literary tradition. In the far north, Piedmont and Lombardy employ vernaculars equidistant from standard French

<sup>1</sup> <i>Elveskud</i>	5A1221AD2B	1 sharp 24 U8	d/g.fg/a.bc/b.ga/g.
	5A14BBE5A14B	1 sharp 24 U16	d./g..fg..b/b..ag..d/g..fg..b/a..
	52BAB212C1AD	1 sharp 38 U8	d/g..(agf)/efga(agf)/d.
<i>C. Colvill</i>	525BE2	34 U8	dgg.g./a.ad../cga. (d..g)/g...g./a...a./d...cg/a...
<i>Elveskud</i>	5AD5234B2B	1 flat 24 U8	(cc)/f.ec/f.gb/d.cd/c..
<i>Renaud</i>	5A1A1A	1 flat 68 U8	cf.e/f.ef.ef.
<i>Bona Viuda</i>	122	38 U16	e(f)g.g./a...a./
<i>C. Nann</i>	25BE25B	2 flats 44 U4	f.(g..c)/b..r(f)/g.c./c.br/
<i>Nest'atnà</i>			
<i>svat'ba III</i>	D9B	1 flat 34 U8	aaa.f./ddc.../
<i>Renaud</i>	3ABB	68 U8	aaa/a..cba/g..
	32B22	68 U8	aaac../dcde../
	3BABB	1 sharp 68 U8	bbb/d..cba/g..

<sup>2</sup> See especially C. Nigra, *Canti popolari del Piemonte*, Turin, 1888 (with some tunes), and G. Ferraro, *Canti popolari Monferrini*, Turin-Florence, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> H. Schuchardt in *Hugo Schuchardt-Brevier*, ed. L. Spitzer, Halle, 1928, p. 167.

and standard Italian, and until the later years of last century constituted a sphere of French political influence. The French ballad style therefore advanced over northern Italy until it encountered the resistance of the 'vulgare illustre' south of the Po.

The presence of ballads dealing with French history is, as we have seen, evidence of unity within the area; *The imprisoned King* transferred from François I to Louis XVI, *Gabriella* and *The English Marriage* (Nigra 5, 36, 46) are our witnesses. The other historical ballads circulating in Piedmont are, for the most part, glorifications of the house of Savoy, commencing with the *March of Prince Tommaso di Savoia* (Nigra 137), a soldier active in the second third of the seventeenth century, and descending to the Napoleonic era. Somewhat earlier than those pieces is *The Marquis of Saluzzo's Will* (Nigra 136), but it is not certain whether this ballad is to be considered contemporary work. *The Siege of Verrua* (Nigra 135) is still more difficult to date.

The castle of Verrua	it is so fair a hold,
upon that rock 'tis planted	that guards the ford of Po.
The beauty at her window	has cast a look below;
has seen approach a vessel	with armed men loaded low.
Their arms are all a-glitter,	it seems they are of gold.
The beauty throws a missile,	and down the boat must go.
Had she not cast that missile,	ta'en were Verrua's hold,
ta'en were Verrua's castle	and Monferrato also.

The missile was, in fact, a stone, and I have used the word merely for the sake of the trochaic rhythm. 'La Bella' has not been identified, so far as I am aware; I suppose she was a cannon, but she might have been some older engine for throwing stones; or, of course, she might have been some person. As for the sieges of Verrua, there is an embarrassment of riches; we can choose between those of 1377, 1387, 1625, and 1704. The earlier dates, preferred by Nigra, seem incompatible with the general date given to this ballad style.

In other respects also the themes circulating in Piedmont approximate closely to those of France. Almost all the ballads included in Doncieux's *Romancéro* have their equivalents in Nigra's *Canti popolari del Piemonte* and in Ferraro's booklet, both those which are purely French and those which we have seen reason to think borrowed from the Germanic peoples. Not only is this agreement close in theme; it descends to the order of sentences and

to the words. The Piedmontese prosody is also that of France and Provence, with the same characteristic alternance between masculine and feminine endings in what may be described as either couplets or long lines divided into hemistichs. The points of difference are only of minor importance. The assonances are often in *é* or *é* plus an unaccented vowel, as in French, but *á, í, ú, ó* are also accepted in assonance as equivalents of *é*. The niceties of prosody are also less scrupulously guarded. This impression may arise in the mind partly owing to an accident of editorship, since none of the French texts have been reproduced with the austerity of the Italian editors; but it must also be due in part to the absence of contact with literary models, since these employ the quite different 'lingua toscana'. It is possible to accept the greater number as genuine traditional poems, without being perplexed by semi-erudite elements. The line tends to be somewhat longer, as the North Italian dialects have suffered less from the loss of final vowels than French has done. The style also is more narrative. In this matter we have to discount once more the preferences of the modern editors, which have been normally lyrical in France and epical in North Italy; but the mass is sufficiently large to justify the observation.

In details we may sometimes note a closer connexion between the Italian and some southern French redaction. Thus *Marianson's Rings* (Nigra 6) take for hero 'Prinsi Raimund' and for villain the 'duca d'Ambò', while the scene is given as Lyons. *The Hanged Scholars* is associated with Toulouse; and *Il Moro Saracino* is an offshoot of the Provençal *Escriveta*. We may suppose also that there would have been traffic in ballads between Genoa and Barcelona, such as would account for *The Princess* (Nigra 8), which is a very short, dramatic equivalent of the Spanish *Count Alarcos*, the Catalan *Conde Floris*. *The Poisoned Man's Will* (Nigra 26) is a rendering of *Lord Randal*. A version encountered at Pisa by Alessandro D'Ancona has the same form as the English ballad; in others the metre has been accommodated to the pattern of the long ballad line. Similarly, *Ambrogio and Lietta*, the theme of the cruel husband who compels his wife to travel fast while with child, stands closer to *Child Waters* than to other forms of the same tale.

To distinguish what is original to Piedmont is more difficult, and perhaps only *Donna Lombarda* can be referred to an Italian minstrel without dubiety. The Italian versions of this piece are

more numerous and veridical than those of other lands; but, of course, there is no need to suppose a poetical tradition going back to the time of Alboin, seeing that Paulus Diaconus's text was one of the best known sources for history in the Middle Ages. One supposes also, though without assurance, that the use of narcotics is a characteristically Italian novelistic device, and that ingenuity has more admirers among the Italian folk than elsewhere. This difficulty of asserting the Italian origin of many poems does not warrant an imputation on the originality of the Piedmontese singers. It is due to the absence of characteristic marks on ballads of adventure, which forbids our localizing very many of them. As a high-road for ballad commerce North Italy is important for the history of those which have spread from the European North and West into southern Italy (and thence sometimes to Greece), to Venice and Dalmatia (and so to Serbia, Bulgaria, and Rumania), and perhaps also, in the Hapsburg armies, to Czechs and Hungarians.

At the other extreme of this Franco-Italian ballad area, the folk-songs of Brittany form a group defended by their peculiar language against the comprehension of strangers, though themselves open to influences streaming in from France.<sup>1</sup> The 'gwerziou' show no sign of the ancient connexion with our islands; they enshrine no heroic traditions comparable with those of the Gaelic poems, nor is there any indication of a bardic school. The English appear as the enemy, with only this difference from French balladry that it is chiefly the English seamen who are feared. There is a considerable amount of international matter, and many ballads deal with the more popularly revolting crimes in the manner characteristic of decadent balladry everywhere. The verse forms are those employed in France: assonating couplets and quatrains (often with the simple rhyme-pattern *aabb*), with or without refrain. The narrative element is more pronounced in these poems, and the literary admixture slight. The Breton 'gwerziou' doubtless form a greater proportion of the total production of the Breton imagination, than do the 'chansons populaires' in France, and so would have played a greater part in the moulding of thought. In this

<sup>1</sup> Breton is not one of the languages I read, and I am dependent on collections in which the original has been faced by a French translation. I follow F. M. Luzel's *Gwerziou Breiz-Izel*, Lorient, 1868-74, with confidence, and H. de la Villemarqué's *Barsaz-Breiz*, Paris, 1867 (6th ed.), with hesitation.

local sense the religious and moral ballads would acquire real importance, especially those which deal with Breton saints, like St. Mathurin and St. Henori, ballads of witchcraft (such as *The Wax Child*, Luzel, i, p. 142), and those that reprove criminals in a dramatic manner. One may cite the case of *Marie Tili* (Luzel, ii, p. 518), who concealed the Holy Wafer in a pot, intending to insult it; the piety of a horse, which kneeled, revealed the sacrilege, and after execution, the useful moral is reached that boys should not drink nor girls learn Latin!

The historical ballads descend in a regular series from the sixteenth century. The debauched *Bishop of Penanstanc* (Luzel, i, p. 424) has been identified as François de la Tour, who died there in 1593; *Count Des Chapelles* (i, p. 456) was a certain François de Rosmadec, decapitated in 1627; and in *Les Aubrays* a poet has sung the duel between Koat-ar-Ster and Jean de Lannion, who died in 1651 (Luzel, i, p. 286, La Villemarqué's *Lex-Breiz*). The *Siege of Guingamp* (Luzel, ii, p. 40) is concerned with the siege of 1591, with which most of the details are in agreement; but the mention of the heroism shown by the cannoneer and his wife may reflect that of Rolland Gouyquet and his wife in the siege of 1488. Another early date is provided by *Marguerite Charlès*, dealing with the capture of a celebrated female bandit in 1598. In a number of cases it is not certain who are the persons of these little dramas, which are represented chiefly in their domestic or seignorial aspect, but there is no reason to believe them earlier than the ones cited. *La belle Catoise* (Luzel, ii, p. 348) is a ballad of 1812, and the Marquis de Locmaria mentioned in *Clerk Lammour* (Luzel, ii, p. 466), was an acquaintance of Madame de Sévigné's. These dates throw into high contrast the suggestion made concerning *The Seawolves* (Luzel, i, p. 72). In quatrains rhyming *aabb*, with a refrain *ccc*, this piece tells how privateers attacked Guéodet and were beaten back in a three days' battle. The event has been identified with Hasting's attack on Roz-Guéodet, which he destroyed in 837; if this be correct, the ballad must have had some literary source or other embodiment in local tradition, since the verse form is relatively modern, as we have seen above, and the genre does not appear to go back earlier than the sixteenth century in Brittany.

The external affiliations of Breton ballads are chiefly with France, but also with Scandinavia in some notable instances. As the best English ballads belong to the regions north of the Trent,

and even north of the Border, it is not possible to discern any English influence on the formation of the Breton corpus. The international matter preserved by Luzel contains some pious pieces which have attained wide celebrity and can hardly be assigned with assurance to any particular focus. There are those which reprove Dives and his wife for their hardness of heart: *The Famine* (i, p. 76), *The Poor Widow* (i, p. 80, miraculously saved from killing her children by the intervention of the Virgin), and *The Two Sisters* (ii, p. 508). The innocent maiden who cannot be burned at the stake appears in *Anne Cozik* (i, p. 218), and there is the apocryphal miracle of the roasted capon which crew, associated with the name of *Marguerite Laurent* (i, p. 210). Specifically French are the poems entitled *She who went to see her Mistress in Hell*, *Marivonnice* or death before dishonour, *The Knight and Shepherdess* and *Robert the Devil*, the latter probably taken from a chapbook (i, pp. 45, 350, 194; ii, p. 24). So also are *La petite Françoise et le petit Pierre* (ii, p. 16), which is a version of *King Loys' Daughter*, *The Sarracens*—a variant of *Escriveta*—and probably also *The Short Straw* (ii, pp. 20, 182). The *Hallewijn* theme appears under the title of *Rozmelchon* and the *Kudrîn* cycle as *Brother and Sister* (i, pp. 308, 202). Among the ballads of Scandinavian origin, the best known is *Count Nann* (i, p. 5), which has already been discussed. The text is fuller than that of France, since it contains the first part of the complete ballad; the tune may also be of Danish origin. A very curious piece, *The Tailor and the Dwarfs* (i, p. 134), relates an attempt to steal the dwarfs' treasure. The robber is compelled to dance to death among them. Apart from the motive for the visit, this resembles the Danish *Elveskud* and other ballads describing the dances of trolls and elves, and it has no French equivalent.

## 2. Central and Southern Italy and Sicily

Central and Southern Italy are regions subject to the dominion of a great artistic literature which has given masterpieces to the world since the thirteenth century; in Sicily, while the dialectal differences suffice to withdraw traditional verse from the overwhelming supremacy of the Humanities, the poetry of the people still takes its rise from the hendecasyllable of the cultured poets, the authors call themselves 'pueti', and indulge in a modest pride. Some names, even, are known, and some details of their ingenuity as practitioners. Their art is essentially lyrical. The art of Pied-

montese ballads was, as we have seen, noticeably narrative, though the impression was sharpened by the personal preferences of the collectors. Nigra preferred, and gave first place to, narrative verses, admitting only a small fraction of the effusions in the lyrical style, the 'stornelli' and 'rispetti'. Consulting other collectors, such as Marcoaldi,<sup>1</sup> we find that these forms are abundant in the North also. On the contrary, epic pieces of the northern type, the existence of which in the southern districts has been formally denied, are abundant. Barbi gathered 116 versions of *Donna Lombarda* in Sicily, and Cocchiara announced a form of the *Belle mal mariée* from the Basilicata and another from Romagna, the French *Captain and the Beauty* from Emilia, *The Diver* from Umbria, as well as offshoots of *Elveskud* (via France) in Venice and probably the Abruzzi.<sup>2</sup> There is no trench separating the north from the centre and south, and yet the differences are very marked in their sum.

The chief difference is that poetry south of the Po supposes a background, not of French medieval literature, but of the Italian Humanities. The hendecasyllable is the established measure, and is used with virtuosity. The great authors are not too far removed from vernacular usage to fail in popularity; stanzas from Tasso are sung by the sailors' wives of Venice. For the purposes of narrative a middle style has been devised by the 'cantastorie' which is at best semi-popular.

Even at this day here and there in the cities of Italy, one meets many 'cantastorie', worthy heritors of Daphnis, who sing their songs (usually strings of octaves) at the corners of the squares, telling stories of knights who fight not for a lady but for a kingdom, the adventures of lovers, satires against boors, contests of mothers anxious to marry off their daughters and debates between brunettes and blondes about the primacy of beauty. These are, in fact, all the themes of the ancient popular poetry in flower, clad with new motifs and modern traits: particularly in those pieces in which we perceive a detailed exposition of local facts and notorious events. The name changes; at Naples the singer is called a 'rinaldo', and at Palermo 'orbo'. The 'cantastorie' is, however, the successor of the old rhapsodes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O. Marcoaldi, *Canti popolari inediti; umbri, liguri, piceni, piemontesi, latini*, Genoa, 1855.

<sup>2</sup> M. Barbi, 'Scibilia Nobili', *Pallante*, i, p. 14; G. Cocchiara, *L'Anima del Popolo italiano nei suoi canti*, Milan, 1927, p. 92 *Fior-d'auliva* and p. 189 *Virguleina*, p. 184 *La Bella Ingrese* and p. 230 *Cecilia* (Nigra 3), p. 136 *L'Anello o il Pescatore*, p. 206 *Il Conte Angiolino* and p. 112 *Nucenzie* (?).

<sup>3</sup> G. Cocchiara, *L'Animo del Popolo italiano nei suoi canti*, Milan, 1927, p. 24.

So the presses of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries produced such works as the *Vaunts of the Paladins*, the *Story of Milon and Berta*, *Bradimonte*, and other chapbooks in verse,<sup>1</sup> which suppose some literacy in the singer, but very little in the audience.

The demand for formal narrative being met in this way, there remained only the lyrical genres for spontaneous improvisation. Two moulds were fashioned. The one, a mere lyrical cry, is that of the 'flowers' (Sicilian 'ciuri', Tuscan 'stornelli', and other names). It opens with the name of a flower: flower of the lupine, pomegranate, lime, of flowers, &c. Then follows a free line (generally), and one other rhyming with the ejaculation:

Flower of the beech,  
Above all beauties thou dost bear the prize,  
and unto you the sun's first beams do reach.

Or

Flower of the vine.  
Thy charms are things that last through endless time.

The gambit is used in Rumanian poetry in the form 'green leaf of . . .' (*Frunză verde*), to introduce poems of considerable extension; but in Italy the two or three lines suffice. A variation on this style is that in which no flower is named, but the same technique is observed:

Starry eyes!  
As many stones as go to make a bridge,  
so many send I ardent lover's sighs.

The other mould is that of the Sicilian 'canzuni', Tuscan 'rispetti'. These are hendecasyllables assonating alternately or in pairs; the number of lines varies, but there is a strong tendency to limit the poem to eight lines. They are less fleeting and more substantial than the 'stornelli', and they have some of the plasticity, though not the neat workmanship, of the classical Greek epigram. The themes are mostly erotic. The lady challenges all nations with her beauty (and especially France), she defies the skill of painters with her blonde tresses, or writers to describe her aright; the singer longs to be a bird and visit her, a necklet to clasp her neck, or to lay a hill of gold at her feet; he holds a dialogue with the water that has mirrored her face or with an intimate thing like a handkerchief; the Holy Father is ready to pardon the pleasant sin of loving; the

<sup>1</sup> G. Barini, *Cantari cavallereschi dei secoli XV e XVI*, Bologna, 1905.



lover protests his faithfulness and sends his heart. Or he is angry or jealous or glad to end a base affection:

Dear God, good day,  
now all my love has fled away;

or he scorns the advances of an amorous old hag. Religion and proverbial wisdom, misfortune, imprisonment, satire, civic rivalry, and other topics find expression in these songs; and in verses of looser structure we find the usual assortment of games, lullabies, prayers, riddles, and 'airs' (arii).

The 'arii' and a few 'canzuni' provide all the narrative verse of Sicily, together with 'legendi o storii'. There are mere allusions in the 'canzuni': to the public baptism of the Saracens by William the Good (1166-89), and even to Count Roger I (d. 1101), to the Sicilian Vespers, and to hostility towards the French.<sup>1</sup> These references have led to the inference that these poems go back to the twelfth century; the inference is supported by the present tense in

Now that King William wears the crown

(Pitrè 568)

and by Pitrè's belief that the 'contrasto' of the *Two Lovers* (968) is a prolongation of Ciullo d'Alcamo's thirteenth-century *Contrasto*. But the allusions are too brief to warrant such conclusions, especially as all these improvisations are touched by the higher literature and show considerable virtuosity. It is not that there were no songs sung in Sicily in those early years—far from it. But the songs are not likely to have been these, with their dependence on a much later development of artistic literature.

When we get narratives of some length we find that they belong to a comparatively recent epoch. The oldest and best of the Sicilian pieces is the *Baroness* (or *Princess*) of *Carini* (Pitrè 918). It is a confused, semi-literary bulletin in verse, in octaves and irregular stanzas, describing the murder of Caterina Talamanca-La Grua on the 4th December, 1565. Her lover, Vincenzo Vernagallo, actually escaped to Madrid and entered a religious order; but the poet, perhaps influenced by Dante, sends him to Hell to see the dead lady and the traitor who betrayed them. *Monsù Bonello* (Pitrè 919) corresponds, perhaps directly, to the first tale in the *Decameron*. The poet dates the event precisely: 26th February 1399; but when he wrote Geneva was already a Calvinist city.

<sup>1</sup> G. Pitrè, *Canti popolari Siciliani*, Palermo, 1891, 2 vols., with bibliography.

*The Devil's Bride* (Pitrè 927) appears to be of Spanish origin. It concerns a girl who gave her soul to the devil, and was only saved, in the Calderonian fashion, by her early devotion to Our Lady of Mercy. The level of taste is below that of the best epochs of ballad composition; below that of Piedmont. There is a calendar of storms, floods, and pestilences afflicting Palermo and Messina between 1630 and 1850, much hero-worship of bandits like Antonino Martino or Antonino Catinella, surnamed 'Jump-the-vines'. There are murders: how an adulteress murdered her child and husband, and a bad baron procured the death of his daughter's lover, and how pretty Giuseppa of Palermo was cut to bits. To such ingenuous horrors the 'pueti' oppose ingenuous marvels of piety, honouring Our Lady of Carmel and of Mercy, and Saints Joseph, Andrew, Anthony of Padua, Antonine, Catherine, Lucy, Rosalia, and Genevieve. There are naïve recapitulations of the Gospel story, and a few international narratives. The *Soldier-husband's Return* has sunk to be *The Prisoner's Return* (from Pantellaria). We meet also the North Italian ballads of the *Lover as Confessor* and *The Lovers' Flight*. Such pieces may have come directly from Liguria by sea, or have followed the land route through Central Italy, where they are also found.

### 3. Spain, Spanish Jewry, Portugal, Ibero-America

Linked to France by the subject-matter of literary and adventure ballads, independent in form and national spirit, the Castilian 'romances' are unsurpassed in Europe for their number, vigour, influence, dramatic intensity, and veracity. Unified by their employment of the octosyllable assonating in alternate lines and by a common technique, these poems form a body, a 'romancero', which works towards a total effect. It is true that the 'romancero' has never been present to the mind of any particular audience as it is to a reader of Durán or Wolf and Hofman,<sup>1</sup> and it is true even that the word is not traditional. The earliest collections, in the middle years of the sixteenth century, were published merely as 'song-books', 'cancioneros'; but the practical convenience of distinguishing between these and other song-books led to the syncopation of 'cancionero de romances' into 'romancero'. The word corresponds, however, to a real thing, to the influence exerted

<sup>1</sup> See Note D at end of book.

by a homogeneous balladry through its mass; and it has passed, more or less appositely, to denote such collections as Doncieux's *Romancéro* and Heine's *Romanzero*. Either usage is an admission of a thing most perfectly exemplified in Spain; a uniform body of narrative verse, severely objective in manner and capable of traditional survival. Similar masses of verse exist in Denmark and Serbia, but neither the 'viser' nor the 'junačke pesme' have given rise to a collective term covering all their ballads.

The Spanish 'romances' are narratives in form and intent, and are thus sharply to be distinguished from the Franco-Italian songs, which have a lyrical origin, and also from those of northern and central Europe which have the form of a lyric even when their matter and manner is narrative. The Russian 'byliny' and the Serbian 'junačke pesme' are also wholly narrative, and the latter are often historically true. The 'romances' differ from them by cultivating a more austere objectivity. Not merely is the lyrical element slight or excluded altogether, but the slight subjectivity involved in the minstrel's words and presence is eliminated in some ballads, leaving the characters in direct colloquy with the auditors. They are intensely dramatic in a way rarely attempted by the 'junačke pesme', more often by the 'viser', and not at all by the 'byliny'.

'King Don Sancho, King Don Sancho,  
 never say you've not been told,  
 from this city of Zamora  
 has gone forth a traitor bold;  
 he calls himself Vellido Dolfos,  
 son of Dolfos, traitor old;  
 four the treasons he's committed,  
 with a fifth the tale is told.  
 If the sire was a foul traitor,  
 fouler is the offspring's mould.'  
 Shouts break out in the encampment:  
 'Sancho's hit and lying cold:  
 murdered by Vellido Dolfos,  
 by the traitor overbold.'  
 Killed the king, he's fled for shelter  
 by a postern in the hold,  
 through the streets of fair Zamora  
 have his shouts and clamours rolled:  
 'Time it is to pay, Urraca,  
 if your promise you would hold.' (Primavera 45)

This is not the first state of a ballad. The 'romances' must have been lengthy pieces like the extant *Count Alarcos* and *Count Dirlos*, but the needs of the concert chamber in the sixteenth century have caused many to be cut short, and discretion has pruned away from the best of them every detail that could be spared. The characters are left to act out their own drama, and so the impression of veracity is heightened. The dominant impression is one of strict historicity: such and such things did happen because they actually are taking place before the eyes of the public. They did happen, also, because a vast mass of Spanish ballads refer to historical persons and events, and because they do so in the most factual manner possible. The supernatural and the marvellous are almost wholly absent from Spanish balladry. It seemed to Southey, who was a good judge, that this is a defect of the 'romancero' which sets it beneath the ballads of our own land. The 'romances' are inferior in the fruits of the imagination which broods on things that are not; they offer no escape from life, either as a source of horror or relief; but their stark humanity powerfully stirs the human in us. 'Mentem mortalia tangunt.'

The form of the 'romance' being precisely defined, it follows that there are many topics excluded from the 'romancero' which we have to notice in dealing with the ballads of other countries. At least two lyrical moulds were formed in the earlier Middle Ages, serving for the domestic occasions and typical encounters which bulk largely wherever the ballad is half lyrical. The older of these was the 'cossante';<sup>1</sup> it was at home in Galicia, whence it extended into Portugal, and its prestige was such that Castilians also composed courtly verses in the Galician dialect. The 'cos-santes' were in distichs with refrain (generally very brief). Their chief aesthetic feature was their immobility; that is to say, lack of either narrative or psychological development. For the space of two, three, or four distichs the poet simply repeated the same situation, the same emotion of longing, anticipation, joy, desolation, restlessness. The clauses naturally tended to run parallel, with little more change than required by the assonance. In some

<sup>1</sup> There are many accounts of this poetical form, the most attractive being that of A. F. G. Bell, *Portuguese Literature*, Oxford, 1922, pp. 22-35. A sufficient number of examples can be found in the *Oxford Book of Portuguese Verse*. In 'From "cantigas de amigo" to "cantigas de amor"', *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, xviii, 1938, pp. 137-52, I attempted to amend the definition given of this kind of poetry, and to show how it affected subsequent lyrics in the Provençal style.

of the later 'cossantes', which have been too readily accepted as typical of this art, the parallelism was made more rigorous, and progress (such as there might be in such simple expressions of feeling) was made by linking the lines. These poems, then, gave expression to the domestic occasions of courtship and separation, and were for the most part, though running under the names of male troubadours and minstrels, regarded as 'women's songs'. Their form suggests the round dance guided by a precentor. They raise the question of feminine priority in the lyric for Portugal as the 'chori feminarum rusticarum' do for France and the 'ženske pesme' for Yugoslavia. In their feminine and domestic setting, their delicate parallelism and exquisite candour, the 'cossantes' resemble the 'dainos' of Lithuania, which we shall have occasion to consider later. During the fifteenth century and early sixteenth, they gave way to another popular form, the quatrain or 'quadra', just as the lyrical 'daina' of Lithuania gave way in Latvia to the epigrammatic 'daina', more often than not a quatrain. At the present day improvisation among the peasants of Portugal and, to some extent, of Galicia uses the mould of the 'quadra'.

In Castile, on the other hand, there flourished a narrative lyric called the 'villancico'. Its early history is hard to unravel, but it is at least plausible to believe that the pattern was known to the Spanish-speaking subjects of the caliphs and sultans of Andalusia. In the fifteenth century the form is exemplified by the 'serranilla' of the Marquis of Santillana. The theme is announced in an opening quatrain or phrase:

No prettier grows a  
dear maid on the Border  
than she, the cow-warder  
of La Finojosa.

The poet then gives, in a sequence of verses ending with this phrase or part of it, a narrative setting for his emotion. He states where he met the maiden, what he was doing, and how the encounter proceeded. These pieces correspond to the 'pastourelles' of France, but they are excluded from the Castilian 'romancero' by the difference of form and by their lyrical manner.

The Spanish ballad style is thus singularly uniform. To be a ballad the poem must be in one sort of verse—the octosyllable with alternate assonance—and in one style—the objective narra-

ive.<sup>1</sup> In Spain, as elsewhere, and perhaps more than elsewhere, ballad is form. But this form is sometimes secondary. There exist lyrical equivalents for the ballads of *Moriana* (the *Donna Lombarda* ballad), the lament for Prince Afonso of Portugal in 1491, and *The Gentle Lady and Boorish Shepherd*. On the other hand, even topical news might be expressed otherwise than by a 'romance', as with the fall of Alora and the song of the *Comendadores de Córdoba*, foundation of a play by Lope de Vega, with its lyrical outburst:

You Comendadores  
to my hurt I've seen.

A number of different lines of evidence converge on the middle years of the fourteenth century as the date of the rise of Castilian balladry. The historical ballads, which relate recent events either as news or as propaganda, give us a steady succession from the epoch of the civil wars in Andalusia between Pedro the Cruel and his brother of Trastámara. Some of them are clearly older than the chronicle of Pedro López de Ayala, which dates from 1394,<sup>2</sup> and it is likely that they go back to dates close to the events. The oldest important incident is the murder of Prince Fadrique in 1358. Ballads claiming to relate episodes from Spanish history before that date are either based on epics or on chronicles, and in either case are of literary origin. The events of the reign of Alfonso XI down to 1344 were celebrated in a long poem, resembling a ballad in some respects, but not in the 'romance' form. The chronicles of medieval Spain show that the epics were still vigorous in the year 1344, when new versions of some of them were recorded for the first time in prose. The epical ballads, which arose out of those epics and at last supplanted them in popular favour, would thus probably belong to a later date than 1344 when the epics were still in bloom. It is in the nature of things that adventure ballads should not be readily datable; but one occasionally encounters wisps of external evidence concerning them. One is that the *Gentle Lady* existed in mixed Spanish and Catalan about 1421. Those which depend on French models must be younger than those models, which, as we have seen, were not very old.

<sup>1</sup> Some critics describe the form as embracing sixteen syllables with medial pause and final assonance, and connect it with the epic line of the 'cantares de gesta'. This point has been discussed in the First Book, Chapter IV. A very few pieces in the narrative style but with lines less than octosyllabic are also included in the 'romancero'.

<sup>2</sup> See my 'Romancero del Rey Don Pedro', *Modern Language Review*, xxv, 1930.

The state of Castile in the third quarter of the fourteenth century was such as to favour the emergence of political verse. Never had faction been so envenomed. The ballads of King Pedro the Cruel's cycle (65-9) polarized this hatred by riveting on the king responsibility for three murders, unpardonable in their atrocity. Brief and anonymous, like editorial articles, they presumed to be the expression of a common judgement; but, more efficient than editorials, they were so framed that they became each reciter's own possession. The king was condemned for the murder of his brother, his cousin, and his wife. The first and second he did, in fact, kill; the third probably died of plague, aggravated by neglect. Yet the force of the ballads concerning Queen Blanche was such that not only were they received into the Chancellor López de Ayala's history of the reign—complete with some assonances—but they persuaded the very partisans of King Pedro. Their reply was not to refute the baseless charge, but to insinuate a new scandal: they insinuated (67)—

it is noised among the people,  
whispered, not as something known—

that the brother and queen might have been lovers, and so deserved their fate.

King Pedro came to the throne in 1350 as a child and without friends. His brothers would, according to Castilian dynastic precedent, have provided centres for disaffection under any circumstances; but their hostility was aggravated by their bastardy, which was a slur to them and a reminder to Pedro of many years of neglect in his father's court. But Pedro had grown up with a mind pathologically rigid. He would make no concession, resign no claim, forgive no fault, nor thank any one for a service. His arrogant pretensions disgusted his neighbours on all sides, alienated the nobles one by one till he was left with but a handful of adherents, and led on to those black crimes which made reconciliation with his brother Enrique impossible. Paying no heed to his father's example, he complicated his position by taking for paramour Doña María de Padilla, a compassionate lady with greedy relatives. For her he neglected his queen, Blanche de Valois, from the day of her marriage. On her untimely death he married Doña María. The marriage legitimated her children, and especially Constance, who became later the claimant to the crown; but the children of

such a marriage were eyed with suspicion, and it was to the interest of the enemy to allege that the marriage had only come because of murder. The career of Pedro the Cruel went from bad to worse, till he fell at Montiel in a fratricidal struggle (1369). Enrique possessed the kingdom by right of conquest and consent, despite his bastardy; a condition he imputed in self-defence to the late king's daughters, one of whom was the wife of John of Gaunt. With John of Gaunt the civil wars entered on a new phase, culminating in his invasion of Castile (1386-8), and closed by the treaty of 1390. The hatred distilled into the ballads of this cycle is thus not only that of the last years of King Pedro's reign, but also that of the years in which his daughters were a deadly menace.

The ballads deal with these events as three murders, two prophecies, and some miscellaneous news. The murders were those of the Master of Santiago, Don Fadrique, in 1358, and of Don Juan, Lord of Biscay, in the same year; Queen Blanche's death in 1561 was set down as a third murder. By the first killing Pedro was branded a fratricide. The poet increased the horror of the event by charging the account to Doña María (though we know—and perhaps he did also—that she begged for the Master's life), whom he represented as a modern Herodias-cum-Salome:

'Twas Epiphany in the morning,  
'twas the first feast of the year;  
when both damisels and matrons  
from the king a guerdon seek;  
some for cloth of silk petitioned,  
for brocade some, fine and sleek,  
some petition him for favours  
in the cause of lovers dear.  
Lady Mary, first of many,  
comes a-begging with a tear,  
begs the head of the Grand Master  
of St. James's chivalry.

(x. p. 53)

The minstrel who first sang of Don Juan's death let the victim speak in the first person. With dramatic pantomime he could excite the lively indignation of the Biscayans and other Basques, whose territories Don Enrique's armies had repeatedly to cross. The device must have proved successful, for it was extended to the



other ballad also. In an amended version which was generally accepted Don Fadrique also relates his own taking off:

There was I in fair Coimbra,  
city that mine arm had won. (65)

The words are untrue. They may have been suggested by the Portuguese war of 1384-8, when Coimbra was several times in the news, and the daughters of Doña María were carrying out, as brides of powerful English princes, an invasion of Castile.

But the crowning horror was an imagined tragedy: the murder of innocent Queen Blanche. A ballad-poet came out with a circumstantial account of the event, contrasting atrocious brutality with angelic patience:

Came the slayer to the princess,  
found her at her orisons.  
On the dire mace-bearer gazing,  
saw she her unhappy doom.  
Said the knave: 'My queen and lady,  
'tis the king who sends thee word,  
set thee now thy soul in order  
with its Maker, even God,  
for thy hour is come upon thee,  
nor can I delay it more.'  
'O my friend,' then spake the princess,  
'this my death I pardon you;  
as the king my lord commandeth,  
even so thou'rt bound to do;  
but deny me not confession,  
pardoned unto God to go.' (69 a)

These are strong words, which have become history.

A device of the political journalists of that age was to dress up vituperation as prophecy. The Chancellor López de Ayala crowns his chronicle of Pedro the Cruel by inventing (or discovering) a certain Benihatín of Granada who prophesied evil concerning the king and then explained his prognostications by the event. In the *Baladro del sabio Merlin* there are alleged prophecies of both earlier and later date; indeed, Merlin was the bookman's prophet, but there were many others. The ballads introduce a clerk who prophesies before the battle of Nájera in 1360, and López de Ayala repeats the tableau. The circumstances do not show clearly whether song or story came first; but it is virtually certain that the shepherd

(pastorcico), who prophesied to the King just before the murder of Queen Blanche, belonged to the ballad (66) rather than the chronicle. It leads up to the murder, but the murder is not of history but of balladry. The 'pastorcico', furthermore, is a supernatural figure; he makes his appearance out of a 'black mass' which the royal huntsmen saw approaching from the direction of Medina Sidonia, and he easily escapes arrest. In rationalizing the episode the chronicler falls into contradictions.

The ballad of Don Pedro's death at Montiel is savage, but pedestrian. In the preceding year the royalists had made a military promenade through the Guadalquivir valley, during which they had momentarily appeared before the gates of Baeza. The readiness of the governor, Ruy Fernández, scared them off after a brief skirmish. This event was celebrated in a ballad, a few lines of which were gathered by Argote de Molina in the year of the Armada (ix, p. 196). It is remarkable in two ways. Referring as it does to one of the fortresses of the Guadalquivir valley, it is virtually a frontier ballad (romance fronterizo), and was readily confused with the oldest piece of that kind, which was also a *Siege of Baeza* (1407) (71). Thus the civil wars merged into the border wars, and the series of ballads is unbroken. The other feature is that the ballad is assuredly the work of an eyewitness. The skirmish was of too little consequence to be mentioned by the historians; but the ballad gives precise information as to persons and places, and by calling the king *Pedro Gil* it gives tongue to the contemporary slander that he was not son of his father but of Don Juan Gil de Alburquerque, his mother's faithful supporter. Such a slander was in the interest of the Trastamaran bastard only so long as the claims of Pedro's house were not united to those of the usurping dynasty; as they were by the marriage of Enrique III and Catherine of Lancaster in terms of the treaty of 1390. A jolly ballad of *The Prior of St. John* (69) represents Pedro as a baffled tyrant, and has not the bitterness of the contemporary pieces. It must have existed by 1455, when a note concerning the alleged event was inserted in the *Fourth General Chronicle of Spain*.

The siege of Baeza, attacked this time by Vanegas and defended by Pedro Díaz, opens a long series of ballads which extends from the year 1407 to the date of Don Alonso de Aguilar's death (1501). They are divided into two series. The earlier is of isolated forays, triumphs and disasters (71-83), without any co-ordinating design.

In the later series (84-96) the background is the War of Granada, but the heroes disport themselves in a merely chivalresque fashion. There is an element of the conventional in the later pieces, with idealized Moors and polished Christians. It has fallen also under the influence of a singular genius, Ginés Pérez de Hita, whose romanticized history of that war shines through Washington Irving's prose for English readers. He is our leading source for several such pieces, and he was not incapable of writing a quite plausible 'traditional' ballad of his own invention. It is rather in the earlier group that we find the classic conditions of balladry. These are the songs of small communities, intensely preoccupied with their own immediate dangers and successes. Local names—Sayavedra, Bishop Gonzalo, Fajardo, &c.—are those that effectively matter. The nation is taken for granted along with the division of religions, but these are not tales of a national drive. As in other lands, the national question is reduced to its simplest form: the irreducible antithesis of Moor and Christian. Kings and great nobles appear in the ballads only when they happen to be on the spot; otherwise royalty is a part of the remoter background. The ballad public was completely homogeneous, but it was no plebs. It had its leaders, and the poets sang of and for these leaders and the gentlemen who lent their swords. A Swedish ballad says of similar raiders:

Them shall men praise  
in courtly lays  
mid knights and dames.

Such courtliness is to be found in the Castilian frontier ballads: instinctive good-breeding in the songs of persons well-bred.

An average ballad of the series—not the dashing *Verdant River* (96 a), which Percy found in Pérez de Hita and made famous in Europe—concerns the fall of Antequera in 1410 (74). It begins:

Fled the Moor from Antequera  
three long hours before the day,  
carried in his hands his letters  
praying earnestly for aid;  
blood in place of ink was written—  
not that ink was wanting there.  
Moor that bore the hasty missive,  
doubly sixty years of age;  
white his flowing beard as silver,  
shaven pate that shone like day,

with his turban wound about it,  
 precious turban, richly made,—  
 'twas embroidered by a Mooress  
 whom he kept as well-loved dame—  
 over all a scarf he carried,  
 silken-tasselled, fine and gay;  
 riding on his mare for swiftmess,  
 of his charger was not fain.  
 Lone he travelled, having only  
 for companion a page;—  
 not for any lack of squirrelings,  
 many in his palace stayed !  
 Seven the ambushes they set him,  
 horsemen bringing him to bay;  
 but that mare was light and nimble,  
 and through all she made her way,  
 through the fields of Archidona;  
 shouted he, and thus did say:  
 'Good my lord and king, if only  
 knewest thou my tidings grave,  
 thou wouldst tear thy locks in handfuls,  
 tear thy beard in dire dismay.'

The finest pieces are sometimes those that recount Christian disasters. One such occurred on the Río Verde in 1448, when the bold soldier Sayavedra fell in by chance with an enormously larger Moorish expedition. The event was confused with the similar death of Don Alonso de Aguilar in the same region in 1501 (96). Another confusion affects two expeditions which set out from Jaén: one, of three hundred

boys of honour only greedy,  
 nay, more truly, boys in love,

who were trapped at Montejícar on 10 May 1410; the other, of four hundred who sallied forth under the guidance of the fighting bishop Gonzalo at a date not precisely known (82). Incidents on the frontier were liable to repeat themselves, and were seldom of such importance as to deserve other witness than the ballads. The poems constituted a stirring, but perishable, record; yet there were fortunately some historians, like an anonymous chronicler of John II, who went to ballads to enrich their information. Thus it is that the chronicle gives us the very day of the conversation which makes up the magical ballad of *Abenámar* (78). It was on the 27th

June 1431, in full sight of the longed-for city, that King John II conversed with the Moorish suppliant prince Yûsuf ibn-Ahmar. The ballad has touched the scene with the gold of poetry. The Moorish prince is aglow with mysterious portents. The city lies unfolding its beauty: Alhambra, Alijares, Generalife, Torres Bermejas. The king is suddenly moved to address the city as a bride apparelled for her marriage; but the city replies she has already chosen her bridegroom:

Up and spake King John unto her,  
 well you'll hear the word he said:  
 'Wert thou willing, O Granada,  
 I and thou today should wed:  
 Córdoba and all Sevilla  
 give thee for thy bridal bed.'  
 'Nay King John, for I am married,  
 wedded wife, not widowed;  
 by the Moor who me possesses  
 lovingly am cherished.'

A vignette of a governor of Murcia who played chess for cities (83) is another example of Castilian sobriety enlivened by Oriental imagination. Just as the metaphor of the city as a bride is Oriental, so the staking of cities or kingdoms on a game has its parallels, notably in the famous game played between Ibn Ammar of Sevilla and Alfonso VI in the eleventh century, which, according to Al-Marrâkašî, led to a complete withdrawal of the Christian forces from the kingdom of Sevilla.

With the final campaigns directed by the Catholic Monarchs from 1481 to 1492 there comes into the frontier ballads a greater monotony. The genre had had its day, and was no longer in a state of pristine freshness. A succession of Moorish champions issue out of the city gates: Barbarín, Albayaldos, Alatar, Muza. They are defeated, one and all, in single combat with Christian champions. In this atmosphere of chivalry war seems a tournament; its tragedies are ignored. Pérez de Hita saw how the convention could be exploited, and he produced round and through these ballads the atmosphere of sentimental chivalrous melancholy—with its Abencerrajes and Boabdils—which the name of Granada now inevitably suggests. All that is needed is that the champions who die in the Vega should be hopelessly in love, and, for preference, each the last of his line. The Chateaubriands and Washington

Irvings have done the rest. Hopeless, romantic passion (and not the savage faction fights of history) has become the mark of the Moor in literature. In the 'morisco' ballads of the seventeenth century the pretence of historical accuracy was dropped, and any Spaniard could pour out tender reproaches in the streets of Madrid by simply calling himself Zaide, Tarfe, or Muza. This is not the atmosphere of the ballads of the Granadine War, though it can hardly now be separated from them. They were, despite their conventions, more sturdy, and one of them, in Byron's spirited rendering, has become world-famous (85):

The Moorish King rides up and down,  
through Granada's royal town;  
from Elvira's gate to those  
of Vivarambla on he goes,  
*Woe is me, Alhama !*

Letters to the monarch tell  
how Alhama's city fell:  
in the fire the scroll he threw,  
and the messenger he slew.  
*Woe is me, Alhama !*

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,  
and through the street directs his course;  
through the street of Zacatín  
to the Alhambra spurring in.  
*Woe is me, Alhama !*

It is one of few ballads composed for the defeated party, and one of the few with a refrain. The style is nervous, but not dry; every action is personal and vivid, and is expressed with more swiftness in Spanish than in English. A Moorish faquih levels reproaches at the King and the sense of disaster thickens, until the ruin of the kingdom is made to appear so close as to be irrevocable:

By thee were slain, in evil hour,  
the Abencerrage, Granada's flower;  
and strangers were received by thee,  
of Córdoba the chivalry,  
*Woe is me, Alhama !*

And for this, oh King! is sent  
on thee a double chastisement;  
thee and thine, thy crown and realm,  
one last wreck shall overwhelm.  
*Woe is me, Alhama !*

There are hundreds of historical ballads which arose after 1501, serving as news-bulletins for the great events of the sixteenth century and for more vulgar occurrences later; but they belong to the age of print and do not enjoy the welcome into oral tradition of the older pieces. Among these, in addition to the themes of civil and frontier warfare, a few miscellaneous ballads were put into circulation. They are interesting for several reasons. *Isabel de Liar* (103-6) has been explained as a castilianization of the tragic history of Inez de Castro, celebrated by Garcia de Rêsende and Camões, and, together with the ballad of the *Duchess of Braganza* (107) and the *Duke of Guimarães* (108), is evidence of the interest that Portuguese affairs began to rouse in the neighbouring land. Other Castilian ballads refer to Aragon and even Naples (98-102). The *Duke of Gandia's Death* (27 July 1497, ix, pp. 205, 207) was the subject of a bulletin in verse which was treasured by the exiled Spanish Jews and forms part of their oral wealth; it is proof that all contact with their homeland was not immediately severed. *The Death of the Prince of Portugal* (ix, p. 204) concerns the premature decease of Dom Afonso, heir to the Portuguese and Castilian crowns, in 1491. Fray Ambrosio Montesinos, who later became a bishop, was instructed by the Catholic Queen to make a ballad on this subject, which shows what latitude must be given to the term 'popular' in dealing with balladry. Another form is more lyrical, and begins with a cry of grief, which is repeated after each four octosyllables:

Ay, ay, ay! what bitter sorrow!  
ay, ay, ay! what bitter grief!

It is not certain which form is the older. The second is one of many instances in which ballad and lyric coincide.<sup>1</sup> Jovellanos discovered another in the famous 'danza prima' of the Asturias, and other instances are *I was going, dear Mother, to Villareale* (ix, p. 269), *The Comendadores of Córdoba* (x, p. 372), *The Serrana de la Vera* (ix, p. 209), *Yes, yes, Antequera's fallen* (xii, p. 134), and *Moriana* (*Romances y Baladas*, p. 7). Some of these are parallel-istic; they are all evidence of the process of incorporation whereby the ballad form engulfed material previously treated in other ways. Thus the uniformity of the Spanish *Romancero*, one of its most

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, *Romances y Baladas*, presidential address to the Modern Humanities Research Association, printed in *M.H.R.A.*, 1927.

distinguishing characteristics, proves to be in part secondary, due to the power of oral tradition to remodel its matter.

The word 'historical' has been used by the Spanish authorities to cover ballads of historical themes previous to 1350; but the usage is ambiguous and has led to confusion of thought. There are ballads, it is true, which purport to relate episodes from Spanish history from the fall of the Gothic kingdom in 711, and these accounts were either true or believed to be so. But the ballads do not, like historical ballads properly so called, arise directly from the events which occurred or were imagined. The proper form for traditional narrative verse previous to 1350 was the epos. Extant are a *Poem of the Cid* (composed about 1140), *The Cid's Youthful Feats* (of the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, replacing an epic of the thirteenth) and one hundred lines of *Roncesvalles*. *The Seven Infantes de Lara* is reproduced in two prose forms: the older in the *First General Chronicle of Spain* (1289), the second in the *Second General Chronicle* (1344). The poetical text is followed with such closeness that it is easy to reconstruct entire tirades; and the best authority is satisfied that he can reproduce for us some two hundred lines from the two chief scenes substantially as the reviser left them. Difference of plot and of assonance prove the existence of two poems, the ballads corresponding to the second one. With similar fidelity a tale of the *Siege of Zamora* has been preserved to us since 1289, and has taken its place among the sources of ballads on the Cid. Count Fernán González, who died in 970 and was the virtual liberator of Castile, was the subject of an epic poem which was remodelled in rhyming quatrains by the author of the *Poem of Fernán González* about 1250, and it was this rhyming poem which was used by the chroniclers in 1289. Some ballads are independent of the rhyming account and correspond better with the prose of the chronicle of 1344. It is fairly certain that they rest on the traditional epic, now lost. An epic of *Bernardo del Carpio* existed and was followed by the chroniclers of 1289; but it was followed only in part, since the chroniclers preferred to rely, whenever possible, on the Hispano-Latin historians who were their immediate predecessors. Again it is probable that some ballads give us the epic text, though few of them are really old. As for the oldest matter—the fall of the Gothic monarchy in 711—it was developed through the pages of Hispano-Arabic, Hispano-Latin, and Castilian chroniclers until it reached its ultimate form as the historical prose



romance called the *Crónica Sarracina* of 1430. All the ballads of the cycle rest on this work. There is very little reason to believe that there ever was a Castilian epic poem on this subject, though there are one or two epic touches in the prose of chroniclers and romancers. It did, however, give rise to a French epic, *Anseïs de Karthage* of the thirteenth century.

It is not necessary to discuss the earlier dates which may be assigned to these epics, since it is only their later metamorphosis into ballads (*Primavera*, 2-62) that concerns us. The chroniclers of 1344 used the texts of still lively 'cantares de gesta'. It has been argued, though it is less certain, that the chroniclers of the fifteenth century continued to draw directly on the epic texts. In either case, it is true that the contact between epos and ballad is closer in Castile than in any other land: the epics were at their best in the twelfth century, and still luxuriant in the first half of the fourteenth; in the second half of the fourteenth there were ballads. There is not evidence, however, to show that the metamorphosis occurred at once, so that the epical ballads were older than any other ballads. On the contrary, all those dealing with the fall of the Goths are necessarily later than the year 1430. The change may well have been a slow one, and epos and ballad may have overlapped for a considerable period. The style of the two genres is very similar. Ballad-makers could use most of the epic lines, assonances, and technique; they could also use the epic language, when not too archaic, and they necessarily presented pictures of an older age. Thus there are reasons for calling the epical ballads 'old', not merely in the sense of Nebrija in 1492 (who meant no more than 'as old as his own childhood'), but in a more absolute sense. Their unselfconsciousness contrasts with the ostentation of a simple art in the ballads of the Carolingian cycles, which are considered to be 'ballads of minstrelsy' (*juglarescos*). The logical antithesis to this term, however, is not 'old ballads' (*viejos*). The critic who opposes 'romances juglarescos' to 'romances viejos' begs the question of age; he is opposing a style to a time, and there is no real antithesis. The 'old' ballads of epical origin may indeed have arisen later than some of the 'ballads of minstrelsy'.

The association between epics and ballads is close. The Spanish school insists on drawing the bonds as close as possible. The ballads are, according to them, fragments of epics; indeed, they go further and consider that fragmentation is the essence of the

'romancero'. There is no doubt that the ballads, as we have them, are more fragmentary than once they were. The compiler of the *Cancionero de Amberes* consistently gave his readers truncated versions, probably because the fashion of singing them at social meetings had led to overcrowding in the programmes, overcrowding much intensified by polyphonic settings. A fortunate discovery among the Jews of Morocco has proved that the *Count Arnaldos* poem was at least twice as long (and not a tithe as effective), and the cycles of the *Marquis of Mantua* and *Montesinos* were probably at one time single long ballads. In their present form Spanish 'romances' are the shortened and broken relics of older and longer poems; but in most cases those poems were also ballads. This is necessarily true of the historical pieces we have discussed in former paragraphs: they never had any other form than that of 'romances', apart from which they would not have worked their proper effects. It is also true of those Carolingian ballads which summarize, but do not reproduce, the plots of French epic poems. In the cycles of *Aimeri de Narbonne*, *Montesinos*, and *The Marquis of Mantua*, the narrative takes certain short cuts to a 'dénouement', decimating the lines and episodes of the epics. To derive the 'romances' from epics by a process of fragmentation is therefore an explanation, if valid, of no more than a small part of the whole 'romancero'.

Even in respect of that small part it has not been possible to reach certainty. The greater number of epical ballads have to be written off as 'ballads of minstrelsy'. Those concerning the Gothic defeat (2-7) all fall within this class, and we further know that they are based on no epic poem, but on the *Crónica Sarracina* of 1430. This does not prevent them from boasting one of the most vivid of 'romances', that lament which Lockhart versified with such spirit as

Last night I was the King of Spain, this night no king am I. (5)

In other cases we are not able to carry the argument into detail because of the loss of the early poetical texts. That is true of the ballads of *Bernardo del Carpio* (8-14), *Fernán González* (15-18), *Infantes de Lara* (19-26), and *Siege of Zamora* (35-54). An exceptional argument can be urged in favour of the Lara group, viz. that the prose of certain chronicles is a close approximation to poetry, and that the ballads of the cycle bear all the marks of authentic epical transmission. However that may be, the absence of the epic originals prevents our reaching an absolute assurance.

On the other hand, though one old and one decadent epic exist concerning the Cid, by far the greater number of ballads must be written off as 'ballads of minstrelsy', or even sheer inventions. In the few cases where the two texts can be placed in parallel columns, there are as many divergences as similarities. Fragmentation alone would not account for the only two which can be rigorously compared; the material and the style have been reshaped.<sup>1</sup>

By their contact with epical poems the Spanish ballads gained many things. They gained in gravity, energy, imagination of a literal kind, dramatism, and nationality. The old Castilian 'gravitas' freed them from the triviality which is a prominent feature of other balladries; even their international pieces have a more sober mien. As a repository of all that concerned the Castilian spirit and as a veracious account of Spanish history the 'romancero' attained a unique authority. It was able to shape a considerable amount of the classical literature of Spain, especially the drama, and thereby to extend its influence beyond the frontiers. This authority, exerted through one style instantly recognizable though dispersed among thousands of ballads, has caused the Spanish corpus to be the most perfect example of a 'romancero'—of short, oral, traditional narratives in verse, collectively forming one whole.

Precisely on account of his popularity, the Cid has not proved to be a conservative figure in the 'romancero'. The ballad-mongers, as they receded farther and farther from the Castilian heroic age, lost sight of other heroes and saw only the Cid. The 205 ballads of the *Romancero del Cid* (edited by Carolina Michaëlis, Leipzig, 1871) are mostly late and arbitrary. In the other cycles many ballads have to be considered comparatively late medieval productions, from the end of the fifteenth century or the beginning of the sixteenth; but those of the *Infantes de Lara* (19–26) stand out for their exceptional apparent fidelity. It is from them, after all, that we must glean our best idea of the old 'cantares de gesta': they give us, as prose cannot, the rush and fury of poetry. Their language is starker, fitted to the stark ferocity of the action. It is in them that we hear the actors speak out their jealousies and hates. In two supreme scenes the language of the chroniclers is poetry thinly disguised: the episode of the heads, and the conclusion. The episode of the heads gives a terrible ballad (24). The first words show that the poet is following the story as it is contained in the

<sup>1</sup> S. G. Morley, *Spanish Ballad Problems*, California, 1925.

revised epic (prosified by the chroniclers of 1344). They also contain what may be an actual historical date from the lives of the 'infantes'; the day on which the Castilian invasion became known to Almansûr at Córdoba. The Moor Alicante rides into the capital with the heads of the seven 'infantes' and their tutor in a kerchief. Almanzor, according to the epics and ballads, took the cloth to the prison and left it to be unrolled by their father Gonzalo Gustos. The old man's grief was terrible. One by one he took up the heads and lamented for his sons, remembering incidents of their young manhood. These references are more precise in the epos as recorded by the chroniclers than in the ballad. The epical style is circumstantial and leisurely; the ballad style summary and dramatic. The distance between the chronicler's text of the 'dénouement' and the last of the ballads (26) is much greater. As it now stands, this piece has omitted everything but the words spoken when Mudarrillo surprised his enemy Ruy Velázquez. Two great poets have traversed the same ground and have been worsted by the anonymous minstrel (or by his effort as sublimated by tradition). Lope de Vega, in his *Bastardo Mudarra*, has avoided too close a contact; his treatment is romanesque and torpid, and the ballad-poet proves to have been more dramatic than the dramatist, more tragic than the tragedian. Victor Hugo's *Don Rodrigue est à la Chasse (Orientales 30)* is a bit of Asiatic rhetoric, not devoid of absurdity due to mislaid 'local colour'. Where two such poets have failed, it is not likely that any rendering will succeed; but the following may convey some notion of the words, form, and dramatic intensity of the original:

Gone a-hunting is Rodrigo,  
and of Lara is his name,  
in the heaviness of midday  
underneath a beech-tree laid,  
heaping curses on Mudarra,  
son unto the Renegade—  
that his soul (could he but seize him)  
from his body would he tear.  
Thus that lord so fiercely muttering,  
Mudarrillo doth appear.

'Gentle sir, may God be with you  
underneath the beech-tree laid.'

'Welcome are you here, good squire,  
unto you I wish the same.'

'Gentle sir, now tell me truly,  
how it is men style your grace?'

'Men do call me Don Rodrigo,  
and of Lara is my name,  
kin am of Gonzalo Gustos,  
Lady Sancha's brother am,  
who begat my seven nephews,  
seven who from Salas came.  
Here I wait for Mudarrillo,  
son unto the Renegade,  
and his soul (were he before me)  
from his body would I tear.'

'If they call you Don Rodrigo,  
and of Lara is your name,  
I'm Gonzalo's son Mudarra,  
born unto the Renegade,  
son of good Gonzalo Gustos,  
Lady Sancha's step-son made,  
who begat my seven brothers,  
seven who from Salas came,  
traitor! whom thou soldst to slaughter  
in Arabiana's vale;  
here thou leavest thy foul spirit,  
if but God come to my aid!'

'Nay, but tarry, Don Gonzalo,  
let me take my coat of mail.'

'Such a tarrying as thou gavest  
them who erst from Salas came;  
here thou perishest, Sir Traitor,  
Sancha's enemy, today!'

The ballads of the Cid, on the other hand, if late and seldom authentically epical, have exerted a powerful influence through their mass multiplied by their popularity. It is from them that the figure of the youthful Cid arises in opposition to the grave statesman of the old *Poem of the Cid*. The young Cid is all fire and dash. He is untameable. To do homage to his liege lord seems to him a humiliation; to show respect to foreign king or pope an outrage to be at once avenged. He is not a lover, since love would curb his unbridled will. As the embodiment of reckless force of will the young Cid is the Don Juan of the Middle Ages; the Don Juan of the classical period is inferior to the young Cid inasmuch as his field of conquest is so much more trivial. He resembles those great

nobles of the later Philips, full of great ambitions without adequate outlet owing to the jealous royal policy. If the young Cid is Don Juan, the old Cid is Don Quixote; but a Don Quixote not frustrated, not tilting against windmills. He seeks justice, but he obtains it; he releases not galley-slaves, but loyal vassals unjustly suspected. The two immutable portraits of the Spanish mind thus emerge from the 'romancero' of the Cid, less complete than when later sketched with all the increased literary power of the Renaissance, but more masters of their fate.

The ballad Cid is not a lover; yet it is from the ballads that there arises the idea of the Cid as a lover, and so of the tragic conflict between his love and his duty. He had been educated at the royal court with Prince Sancho. Urraca, who was somewhat older, had thus been his early playmate, and when he appeared in arms before her fortress of Zamora, she reproached him with forgetting his ancient kindness. So far the text of the chroniclers takes us. But the ballad poet goes further and imagines that the Cid's match with Jimena implied passing over the princess:

'Twas my father gave you armour,  
and your horse my mother gave,  
I did gird your spurs upon you,  
that more honour you might have;  
for I thought we two should marry,  
but my sins have said me nay,  
and you wed Jimena Gómez,  
daughter of the County Gay;  
with your wife you've won you money,  
but from me you'd have estate;  
noble, Roderick, is your marriage—  
you *might* have had a princely mate! (69)

The motives imputed are avarice and ambition, not love; but what the poet has established, if not the love of Rodrigo and Jimena, is that for her sake he refused the finest match in Castile. To confront this with the obligation in honour to kill Jimena's father was the work of Guillén de Castro; to universalize the conflict of love and honour, to base tragedy on alternatives of duty, was Corneille's finishing touch.

There survive among the old Spanish epics some hundred lines of a poem on *Roncesvalles*. It does not appear to have been older than the thirteenth century, since Reynald of Montauban is as great a hero as Roland. The moment preserved is that in which

Charlemagne returns to the field to scrutinize the dead. These characteristics of a thirteenth-century epic are to be found in the ballads of *King Marsin's Flight* (ix, p. 245) and its derivative (183). It is a fragment of some longer poem, and the moment is the rout of Marsilie's forces. Roland dare not blow his horn in case he excite the contempt of his rival Reynald. The narrative is hispanized, and includes a technical term of Peninsular warfare unlikely to be known in France; in this piece, therefore, we have probably a second fragment of *Roncesvalles* or a derivative poem founded on it. *Lady Alda* (184) may be another fragment. It is a romantic and pathetic piece in which Lady Aude's heart breaks to slow music, as in the rhymed *Roncesvaux*. Other ballads (180-6) ostensibly relating to this battle are not of epical origin. Some one made Roland's sword into a hero, Durandarte,<sup>1</sup> and endowed him with a romantic affection for Belerma. He dies, with tender reproaches on his lips, in the lost battle:

Oh Belerma, oh Belerma,  
for my sore affliction born!  
Seven years I truly served thee,  
but from thee have nothing won.  
I unhappy (now thou lovest)  
perish in this rout forlorn.  
Not my death is such affliction—  
though death call me all too soon,—  
but it grieves from thee beholding  
and thy service to be torn. (181)

The ballad of *Guarinos, Admiral of the Sea* (186), is a tale of escape from captivity, of uncertain origin. It uses many of the commonplaces of the chivalresque epos, and the name is that of Garin d'Anseüne, a deuteragonist in many 'chansons de geste'. The first words connect these adventures of his with the battle of Roncesvalles:

Evil fortune saw ye, Frenchmen,  
in the Chase of Roncesvaux;  
where your Charles has lost his honour,  
died his dozen peers also.

<sup>1</sup> In *Ogier de Dinamarche* one meets the line (describing Courtain, Ogier's sword):

qui moult ce tint valt mains que Durendal.

The comparison is between two swords, Durendal and Courtain; but, according to the syntax, it might be a comparison between two heroes, Durendal and the wielder of Courtain. Some such confusion may have originated the Spanish Durandarte, if he is not an arbitrary creation of fancy.

These words were encountered in Russian, in distant Siberia in 1834, thanks to Karamzin's translation executed in 1789, which became, on this account, 'the birth-year of the Russian ballad'.<sup>1</sup>

Epical ballads form the most important class of 'romances', dependent on previous works of literature, both because of their intrinsic merit, and because they continue the central tradition of Castilian thought. Other literary suggestions came from France; particularly the Arthurian and Carolingian novels. The former are a small closed group of three ballads. They arise directly out of the prose texts of *Lancelot* and *Tristan*, probably in the Spanish translations executed at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That can be affirmed positively concerning the ballad of *Tristan's Death* (146). It is a laconic summary of three chapters of the still extant novel, reproducing some of the phrases. In later versions this ballad became entangled with the superstition of the herb of pregnancy, which belongs properly to *Doña Ausenda* (x, p. 105). The resurrection of dead lovers as entwining trees is a motif present in this ballad as also in *Count Olinos* (x, p. 72). When these accretions are removed, we are left with the substance of the old romance. Two ballads deal with *Lancelot* (147, 148). They are probably parts of the romance translated as *Lanzarote de Lago*, of which only the second section survives in an unpublished manuscript. It would be between the close of that part and the commencement of the Grail that we should expect to encounter the adventure of the *White-footed Stag* (147), which is akin to the French *Tyolet* and to an episode of the Dutch *Lanceloet*. The assonances change either three or four times in the course of the ballad; the extra assonance was recorded by Nebrija who, in 1492, mentioned the ballad as an old one. These changes, since they cannot refer to *laisses* in an original which was in prose, probably correspond to chapters of the original. Formerly the ballad must have been longer than it now is, because the introductory lines are quite inexplicable. This ballad speaks of a *Doña Quintañona* or Lady Centenarian, who is a character of the other *Lancelot* ballad. In this piece she stands in place of Lady Malehaut as the lovers' go-between. For the rest, the ballad reproduces no specific incident, but a general impression of the challenges, excursions and returns to Guenevere's

<sup>1</sup> 'Das Jahr 1789 ist also das Geburtsjahr der russischen Ballade, allerdings der Übersetzungsballade.' F. W. Neumann, *Geschichte der russischen Ballade*, Königsberg, 1937, p. 27.



affections which constitute the stuff of the Lancelot story. Cervantes particularly cherished the opening lines:

Ne'er was knight so nobly tended,  
nobly served by gentle dames,  
as was Lancelot the goodly  
when from Brittany he came.  
Matrons stood and waited on him,  
damsels waited on his jade,  
and that Lady Centenarian  
skilfully his liquor strained,  
and Queen Guenevere the lovely  
by her side the hero laid. (148)

The Carolingian ballads are far more numerous and elaborate. They cannot be made into a closed group, because of the Castilian custom of attracting into this cycle all romantic narratives. Some of them should thus be termed semi-Carolingian, rather than Carolingian, and even so there remain others uncertainly attached. The fact is that almost all the adventure ballads current in Castile were of foreign origin. The genius of the land was to form veracious historical statements, or at least such as could lay reasonable claim to historicity. Mere fabling was at a discount. But in France there was a lively imagination at work to produce effects which, even if they had some historical sanction for Frenchmen, were mere novels to Spaniards. The Castilians made no effective discrimination between the pseudo-historical adventures of Charlemagne's peers and those of anonymous heroes. The poets knew France as a land with one city (Paris) and one emperor (Charlemagne). It was also a land where proper names commonly ended in -os, as Oliveros, Montesinos, Guarinos, Gaiferos, Caláinos, Carlos: a curious survival of the Old French nominatives in -s. Now it was from French originals and intermediaries that they knew all, or almost all, they learned about the balladry of the rest of Europe. Signs of the importation are that the action of such ballads is often said to be in France (though Aragón may be mentioned as a land lying between Castile and France and probably actually traversed by these ballads in their extension to Castile), that proper names are of a French sort, that there may be mention of an emperor, and that there is some tendency to conform to the French rule about the unequal cadences of hemistichs in a long line. While it is not impossible for an adventure to be wholly castilianized, romantic adventures

under Spanish names and in Spanish places are both rare and short.

A sub-group is formed by the cycles of the *Marquis of Mantua* (165-7), *Montesinos* (175-6), and *Almerique de Narbona* (196), because in each case we are able to identify the remote epic original, though there was probably some nearer source in chap-books. These ballads descend from the French *Ogier*, *Aïol*, and *Aimeri de Narbonne*; in each case there is some datum in the epics which makes for length, and which has been suppressed by the ballad-poets. In *Ogier* it is that, when he demands satisfaction for the murder of his son, Charlemagne refuses it. That is the source of the long war in Italy, ending with Ogier's flight and imprisonment. According to the ballad-maker, Charles at once set up a court to try the offender, who was his own son Charlot. Aïol had to avenge his parents on a powerful faction at court, and consequently devoted his efforts at first to conciliating the king and gaining supporters: Montesinos goes to the palace (which he can see from the Pyrenees!), overlooks a game of chess, accuses his enemy of cheating, and kills him on the spot. He kills him with a chess-board, thus taking a hint from *Doon de la Roche*, along with the villain's name. In the third case, the epic siege of Narbonne was complicated by the capture of Aimeri, whose release was purchased by the surrender of the town, though the citadel remained in French hands; there was thus no ultimate surrender of the fortress for the sake of the hero, and the ballad-maker goes straight to the point by causing him to reject *every* proposal for exchange. By these means it was possible to summarize for the populace the essence of long epic poems, doubtless already abbreviated in intermediate sources. The same kind of correspondence links the poems of *Reinaldos de Montalbán* to the prose romance about his Empire of Trapizonde (187-9), *Calatnos* to *Fierabras* (193-4), *Melisenda* to *Amis et Amiles* (198), and *Valdovinos* to the *Chanson des Saisnes* (169). *Gerineldo* (161) appears to rest on the tradition of Eginhard's amours at Charlemagne's court. It is one of the most popular of all Spanish ballads, and commonly goes united to the international motif of the *Prevented Remarriage* (135).

The semi-Carolingian group includes such important ballads as *Count Alarcos* (163), *Count Dirlos* (164), and *Gaiferos* (171-4). They are international ballad themes thrust into a Carolingian context. The first depends on the motif of the wicked princess who

forces a man she admires to put his wife to death. So stated, there is material for only a short poem, and so it appears in Piedmont (Nigra 6); but delaying and elaborating the incident the Spanish minstrel has contrived to make it one of the longest that survives from ancient date. The longest is *Count Dirlos*, and for the same reason. It is merely the *Noble Moringer* motif, of German origin, but elaborated with all possible Carolingian pomp of names. As for *Gaiferos*, who

quite forgot his lady free,

the case is more complex. Essentially we are concerned with an escape from imprisonment by a hero and a lady: that is the theme of the old Germanic epos of *Walter of Aquitaine*. In that poem, however, Walter and Hildigund are both hostages at Attila's court, but in the ballads of *Gaiferos* he is free and at his ease in Paris when the action opens. People remind him that he has a lady-love languishing in prison in Sansueña (which is both Zaragoza and Saxony in the ballads); he makes his way thither, recognizes the lady, leaps the walls with her when the Moor closes the gates, and fights a running battle all the way to the French frontier (efficaciously aided, at Maese Pedro's puppet-show, by the redoubtable Knight of la Mancha). So it is in three ballads (171-3), but in a fourth it is *Gaiferos* himself who is escaping from prison:

On the very stroke of midnight,  
when the cocks began to cry,  
very secretly *Gaiferos*  
issued from captivity. (174)

This is somewhat incoherent, and belongs to the traditions of *Walter*. The other adventure is the stuff of the Catalan-Provençal ballad of *L'Escriveta*, but served earlier for the French romances of *Aye d'Avignon* and *Comtesse de Ponthieu*. The deeds of *Gaiferos* are not directly derived from any of these three sources, but probably from one now lost. His name suggests a *Gaiffier* of Aquitaine, substituted (with deference to certain noble persons) for *Gautier*, the Germanic *Walter*.

A more recent German epos to penetrate into Spain is *Kudrûn*. This gives the ballad of *Don Bueso* (the name is French), a derivative of the ballads, perhaps, rather than the thirteenth-century epic (x, p. 56).

As we approach the domain of narratives which have never been

other than simple ballads, we have still to take note of French influences, and even of those of literary convention. The convention of 'amour courtois' is found in *The gentle Lady and boorish Shepherd* (145) and the *Infantina* (151). In the former one critic has thought to see the beginning of *Elveskud*, but for this there seems little justification. There is no evidence that we have to do with elves, and the strongest evidence that we have an inverted 'pastour-elle'. The boor does not recognize his luck when he sees it. An amusing parallel to the Spanish ballad is the English doggerel ditty:

There was a lady loved a swine,  
 'Honey,' quoth she.  
 'Pig-hog, wilt thou be mine?'  
 'Humph!' quoth he.  
 'I will build thee a silver sty,  
 honey,' quoth she,  
 'and in it shalt thou lie . . .'  
 'Humph!' quoth he.  
 ' . . pinned with a silver pin,  
 honey,' quoth she,  
 'that thou mayest go out and in.'  
 'Humph!' quoth he.  
 'Wilt thou now have me,  
 honey?' quoth she.  
 'Humph, humph, humph!' quoth he,  
 and away went he.

It is also the theme of Henryson's *Robin and Makine*, which has a conclusion more in keeping with the second ballad. This is concerned with the tardy gallant who makes his proposals too late, and is mocked by the lady, as in the French *Occasion Manquée*.

The 'maumariée' motif appears in *Blancaniña* and *Albaniña* (136), but it is treated with intense emotion. The Spanish ballad-poet does not think adultery amusing; persistent cruelty explains it, without justifying it. Consequently, there is no immunity granted to the lady in this ballad; but after some swift questions and answers her guilt is evident and she herself asks her husband to kill her. Allied in theme and treatment is the ballad of *Bernal Francés* (xii, p. 502). It occurs also in Piedmont (Nigra 30). The identification with Bernard of Septimania, executed by Charles the Bald in 844 on suspicion of intercourse with Queen Judith,

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seems adventurous. The Italian name 're Inardi' resembles 'Bernaldino' or 'Bernardin' closely enough to guarantee the identity in all important respects of the Spanish and North Italian traditions.

More fugitive conventions are represented by the May theme and the power of song. Gil Vicente gives us a short rhapsody, which is the May song in a very simple form:

This is the May, the May is this,  
this is the May and all aflower.

But the Spanish tradition, which appears in the ballad of the *Prisoner* (114) and elsewhere, depends on the set descriptions of the season which are to be found interspersed in French 'chansons de geste', as well as in the prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* and in Greece (Politis 235, &c.): that is, it proceeds by stages from the warm season, through flowers, birds, animals, to human lovers. This is not the manner of the medieval lyrical 'reverdies', but more epic in tone. It serves as prologue in Spanish to a narrative about some prisoner which has, fortunately, been truncated. The contrast is thus the more poignant:

Oh 'tis May, the month of May,  
when the season's heat is high,  
and the larks above are singing  
and the nightingales reply,  
and all lovers are a-running  
on love's errands far and nigh;  
all but me, afflicted, wretched,  
that in prison-house do lie;  
neither know I when day cometh,  
nor when night is passing by,  
were it not for one wee birdie,  
singing when the dawn is nigh:  
but an archer slew my birdie—  
may he earn God's curse thereby! (114)

The other motif appears in *Count Olinos* (x, p. 72), which is a fine ballad, but yet inferior to *Count Arnaldos* (153), which many would reckon the flower of the 'romancero':

Fain would I have had the fortune  
ocean's rolling waves upon,  
fortune that befel Arnaldos  
on the morning of St. John!

On his wrist a hooded falcon,  
 was the Count a-hunting gone,  
 when he saw a stately galley  
 just about to reach the shore.  
 Silken all the sails she carried,  
 and of sendal rope and thong,  
 and a sailor who was steering  
 chanted, as he sailed, a song:  
 song that hushed the sea to stillness,  
 quieted the wild winds down;  
 fish in the abysses swimming  
 it beguiled to swim above,  
 birds in heights of air a-flying  
 charmed to rest his mast upon.  
 Then outspake the Count Arnaldos,  
 you shall hear his word anon:  
 'In the name of God, good sailor,  
 teach me, teach me, this your song.'  
 Answered thus to him the sailor,  
 thus to him has answer done:  
 'No man teach I what I'm singing,  
 save he sail with me along.'<sup>1</sup>

The charm of *Count Arnaldos* is produced entirely by a most fortunate forgetfulness. The end of the story is a commonplace matter; the sailor is a pirate and seizes the Count, but then recognizes in him his long-lost lord, and all ends happily. The cut, applied in the *Cancionero de Amberes*, has added just that salt of lyrical emotion which is needed to make the perfect ballad; for though we have defined ballads as narratives, yet such narratives only reach exquisiteness when they have this lyrical touch. It is in *Mudarra's Vengeance* and *Blancaniña*, in *Count Olinos* and *The Prisoner*; and in each case it comes from the same refining process, which has cleared away prosaic detail, and left us an emotion in purest poignancy. The same touch is found in *Rosa fresca* and *Fonte frida* (115, 116), which would doubtless have been at one time banal histories of adultery. The latter must have existed early in the fifteenth century, for its wording influenced Jaume de Olesa's copy of the *Gentle Lady*, which must be dated about 1421. *Fonte frida* might be rendered thus:

Cooling fountain, cooling fountain,  
 cooling fountain, fount of love.

<sup>1</sup> See Note F.

Thither little birds are winging,  
 all there consolation know,  
 save that drooping in her sorrow  
 broods the widowed turtle-dove.  
 Thither hasteneth a traitor,  
 comes the nightingale along:  
 and he fashioneth his discourse,  
 and of treason is each word:  
 'Wert thou gracious to me, lady,  
 I would be thy servant now.'  
 'Out away, thou art a traitor,  
 false, sly, tricky didst thou prove.  
 Never more I on green bough settle,  
 nor in meadow make my bower.  
 Turbid is the fountain's water,  
 that, when found, did limpid show.  
 Never may I marry husband,  
 never children bear of love:  
 pleasure comes no more from children,  
 nor does consolation come.  
 Out away, thou sorry traitor,  
 false, sly, tricky dost thou prove,  
 never will I be thy lady,  
 never be thy married love.'

The full story, did we know it, might be that of the *Lady of Weissenberg* reversed. *Nuño Vero* (168) is another of the same kind. It uses the motif of a false report of a husband's death. Some of its words have crept into the *Tristán* ballad, thus attesting its own early date.

The power of love is a motif of all balladry, and it is the principal moral left by the romantic portion of the 'romancero':

that the faults that lovers make  
 worthily forgiveness gain.

It is the indulgent moral of the classical 'comedia', which uses love as the universal motive. The notion of the lover who alone pays ransom is not known in Spain; but the triumph of love over death, exemplified by the springing of trees and flowers as in the French *Thorn and Olive*, is a feature of *Tristán* and *Count Olinos*. As for the power of beauty, it finds expression in an admirable fragment, *St. Simon's Hermitage* (143). A fuller version is current in Catalonia under the title of *The Lady of Aragon*. It was probably borrowed by the Catalans, directly or indirectly, from the Greeks

of Corsica or Southern Italy, since it exactly corresponds to a part of *Bridesmaid into Bride* (Politis 83). A ballad which might appear to be written in praise of the power of love is *Angela or the Dead resurrected* (x, p. 136). It is based, however, on a real event in the sixteenth century. A girl, married against her will, died and was buried. She revived when her true lover opened her grave, and a lawsuit was begun before the tribunal at Valladolid to determine whether death annulled the marriage.

To return to the more important narrative ballads, the *Remarriage prevented* (135), also known as *Count Sun*, describes how a slighted lady comes and claims her husband before he takes to himself a second wife. In England this motif is used in *Young Beichan and Susie Pye*. The Spanish version arises by amalgamation with an independent motif, *The Signs of the Beloved*, which appears in reports of the husband's death: true reports in the case of *Belle Doette*, false in *Unter der Linde*. Another theme current in England—and this time of definitely English origin in ballad literature—is *Ramón Berenguer and the German Empress* (162), which is the Spanish representative of *Sir Aldingar*. The Spanish poem is late; it is later than the castilianization of Catalonia. Its source is the chronicle of Desclot, where a decasyllabic heroic poem on this subject has been reduced to prose, not greatly deviating from the probable poetic text. Narrative verse is rare in Old Catalan literature, so that this instance (like that of the probable heroic poem on the conquest of Majorca) is of high historical interest. The immediate source of the Catalan poet was probably Toulouse, which city was a distributing-centre for this and other legends of remoter origin. Our *Child Waters* and the Piedmontese *Ambrogio and Lietta* (Nigra 35) are among the closest parallels to the Spanish *Doña Arbola* (x, p. 93). Definitely Italian in origin is the ballad of the poisoner *Moriana* (x, p. 98), which is an offshoot of *Donna Lombarda*. *Rico Franco* (119) is a worthy representative of the Dutch cycle of *Hallewijn*, since it is swift and concise; and with it is grouped a rather similar tale of a murderer outwitted by a woman's ruse, *Marquillos* (120). The Danish *Elveskud*, passing through France and becoming *Le roi Renaud*, lost its elfin opening. So it comes to Spain, where it is the ballad of *Don Pedro and Doña Alda* (x, p. 110).

These ballads of remoter origin bear marks of their passage through France. Those of French origin are more numerous and



more developed. One with a pseudo-Carolingian setting is *Count Claros of Montalban* (190-2). The fief of Montalban related Claros to Reynald, and the affair is said to pass at Charlemagne's court, with the usual mention of other peers; but it is in reality an anonymous intrigue, or rather two. For the story is told in two forms: in one Claros boasts that he has conquered the affections of the princess, and he is apprehended and led off to be executed, but escapes by her intervention; in the other, it is the princess who is arrested and kept in prison with water up to her waist until Claros comes to set her free by his valour. The former version corresponds to the fragmentary *Count Vélez* and *Florencios* (ix, 189, 312, and *Primavera* 138), in which other heroes boast of their triumphs unduly, and to the Russian ballad of *Nastaija Politovskaja* (Rybnikov 33). The Asturian *Galansuca* (x, p. 42) is a somewhat simplified version of the first adventure. In the French *Romancéro* the two imprisonments for love are represented by *King Loys' Daughter* (imprisoned princess) and *La Pernelle* (or *La Belle se siet au pied de la tour*); but in the former her escape is due to her own ruse of shamming dead, as in our *Gay Goshawk*, and in the latter both lovers die. The first adventure of Count Claros thus does not correspond to the songs now accepted as constituting the French 'chanson populaire', but to an older age: it corresponds to Audefroï le Bâtard's *Belle Ydoine*, which itself was based, doubtless, on a traditional story. The second is also different in detail from the corresponding French poem, as well as being more amply narrative in manner.

This tableau of high jinks in high society is found also in *A Child is born to the Princess and Galván and the Princess* (160, 159). More dourly licentious is *Delgadina* (x, p. 126), reproducing the *Manekin* legend. *The Princess and the King of France's Son* (158) is a tale of intrigue or ravishment, similar to the Catalan *Mariner* (Milà 199, 201, 207), though it is not stated in the Castilian form that the ravisher is a sailor. It is as a sailor that the king's son appears in northern Italy (Nigra 44); but this description would not suit the vaguely Carolingian setting of the Castilian version. Another maritime ballad has not made a lodgement in Castilian, but has been restricted to the coastal regions. It is the Portuguese *Ship Catherine* (x, p. 258), with the name of a particular ship of the early sixteenth century. In Catalonia it is called *The Cabin Boy* (Milà 215), and in France *The Short Straw* (Doncieux 17). Found also

in Brittany and Scandinavia, its absence from English balladry is notable, for we must wait for Thackeray's *Little Billee* to adduce a parallel.

Stories of vengeance in a vaguely Carolingian setting are *The Avenging Prince* and *The Palmer* (150, 195). The former would be banal enough but for the swiftness and excitement of the first lines, which bring the action vividly before the auditors' eyes:

See him, see him, where he cometh,  
cometh the avenging lord !  
Riding with his stirrups shortened  
on his war-horse swift and strong,  
mantle twisted round his left arm,  
all his ruddy colour gone,  
in his right hand firmly grasping  
a javelin both keen and long,  
such that one might cut a ploughshare  
with that javelin's keen point;  
seven times was it attempered  
in a furious dragon's blood,  
seven times more was it sharpened,  
so that it might cut the more:  
'twas in France the steel was hammered,  
cut the shaft in Aragón:  
still he whets it, as he hastened,  
on the wings of his falcón.

*The Warlike Maid* or *Don Martín of Aragón* (x, p. 119) has parallels in all the lands of Europe, and even in China (the legend of Mulan). Its source in Spain must be either a poem akin to the French *Belle Claudine* or the Italian *Warlike Maid* (Nigra 48).

In addition to these there are a few pieces for which a foreign origin need not, so far as one knows, be conjectured. In *Espinelo* (152) we have a conventional adventure story starting from the superstition that of twins one must be the fruit of adultery; Espinelo is therefore set adrift by his mother, the Queen of France, drifts to a Moorish land, is adopted by the sultan, and ends his life as a great monarch. In *Bovalias the Pagan* (126) nothing occurs; the sole point made by the ballad is that his tent was crowned by a ruby which gave light to the camp. This belief in carbuncles or rubies is found generally throughout Europe, and was used more than once in French 'chansons de geste' which were known to the Spaniards. *Peranzules*, *King Búcar*, *Sevilla*, *Alfonso Ramos* are

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titles of other similar pieces too brief to give away the secrets of  
their origin.

My father came from Ronda,  
my mother from Antequera (131)

sings a Christian captive girl in a ballad which should, perhaps, be included among those of the frontier; it is historical as to customs, if not as to facts. On the other hand, *Moraima* (132), where a pretty Mooress is tricked into admitting a Christian who pretends to be her uncle, is mere fiction. *Don Manuel de León* (134), a ballad of the sixteenth century, contains the legend of the glove thrown to lions and recovered by a brave knight, together with the punishment of the flighty lady who exposed him to the risk, which is the legend of Schiller's *Handschuh*. Schiller's source was French, but the Spanish version appears to have been older, since already in 1557 Don Manuel de León was famous for his successes with the ladies, in battle against the Moors and over lions. A group of ballads in general imitation of the *Gaiferos* series is entitled *Moriana* or *Julianesa* (121-5) and contains some striking phrases. The best of them describes an unwearying pursuit, and some genius has cut away from it all the entangling narrative:

For my ornaments are weapons,  
I in battle take my ease,  
stubborn rocks they are my mattress,  
keeping vigil is my sleep;  
dens of beasts surround me darkling,  
roads untrod by human feet,  
and the heavens, forever changing,  
take delight in hurting me,  
as I roam from hill to hilltop  
and by beaches of the sea,  
seeking, seeking, if safe fording  
through my wretchedness may be.  
But for sake of you, dear lady,  
all endure I cheerfully. (125)

*Don García* (133), who defended Ureña by dressing his dead in armour and manning the walls, depends probably on the chap-books of *Ogier*, where a similar stratagem was employed. *The Skull's Invitation* (x, p. 209) is the germ of the Don Juan legend.

This is the picture of Castilian balladry in its hey-day, or when but slightly impaired, but it represents only a small section of the

total wealth of Spanish ballads. Production has gone on unceasingly since 1500. Its mass has been swelled, and its quality grievously diminished, by print. Towards the middle of the sixteenth century the first collection appeared, the anonymous *Cancionero de Amberes*. It had an instant success, and several other collections of traditional pieces were issued simultaneously. These collections gave the standard for ballad-texts, and have exercised a decisive influence in favour of curtailment. At the same time the printing-presses poured out a flood of fly-leaves (*pliegos sueltos*) for the use of street-singers. Collections were made also of particular cycles, such as the ballads of the *Infantes de Lara* and the *Cid*. Into them were swept not merely traditional pieces, but also modern inventions; for the interest aroused by the 'romances' tempted versifiers like Timoneda and 'the Caesarian knight' (Mejía?) to chop up the chronicles into verses. Such ballads are customarily called learned (*eruditos*) by Spanish critics. They are not usually happy.

In this way a new wave of invention set in. What the 'learned' had begun was continued by the great poets (*romances artísticos*). Lope de Vega's love for the genre was so great that his plays are a principal source for discovering lost versions or whole ballads. Naturally the texts are accommodated to his requirements as a playwright; but so skilfully that it is scarcely possible to determine what is new and what traditional. Like Burns, Scott, and Goethe, Lope is one of the great poets who has completely absorbed the ballad technique. But apart from pieces in, or associated with, the traditional themes, Lope de Vega composed ballads on his own affairs, chiefly of an amatory nature. It was in this direction that literary fashion was tending. The sentimental Moor had been invented by Ginés Pérez de Hita, with some help from the Granadine series of frontier ballads, and all Spaniards who felt sentimental felt obliged to turn Moor in their verses (*romances moriscos*). This is the kind of ballad in which Góngora excelled, though sometimes with a more virile accent than is common in the genre. His *Spaniard in Orán* is a splendid piece, the ballad technique receiving the perfecting touch of the artist. Góngora's verses seemed to Herder to have the same qualities as the anonymous ballads, and to promise the same enrichment for the German poetry for which he longed.

Calderón, somewhat younger than Góngora, was not a successful writer of ballads. It is true that he made but one attempt, but

his plays show that he had lost sight of one essential element: the narrative value of the 'romance'. There was general decadence in all the types of Spanish literature, and when the eighteenth century opened, the ballads had been divorced from good taste. They had become plebeian in subject and style (*romances vulgares*). Though the one quite successful lyric of the age was an attempt to retell an episode from the life of the Cid, the measure employed by Nicolás Fernández de Moratín was not the ballad measure. They came back to favour with the Romantic movement of the early nineteenth century, and were gathered into the vast *Romancero* of Agustín Durán. In this form, however, there was little distinction between good and bad, and the 'strengthless heads' of late and artificial ballads were found pell-mell among those which spoke 'wingèd words'. The Romantics, furthermore, were digesting all their past national traditions simultaneously. Rivas's *Moro Expósito* (1834) owes more to dramas of the decadence than to the fine cycle of the *Infantes de Lara*. His epos illustrates also the Romantic preoccupation with 'local colour'. It is this concern chiefly which prevents the 'leyendas' of Rivas and Zorrilla from being true ballads. They self-consciously attempt to produce an atmosphere, which the veracious ballad-poets took for granted.

Both artistic and vulgar ballads continue to appear in our own time. The lamented García Lorca aimed at bringing back to the Spanish Parnassus not only their traditional style, but also their music, restoring to poetry once again its old outer clothing of melody. Other moderns, such as Don Salvador de Madariaga, have used the ballad metre for their own purposes. On the other hand, the deaths of bullfighters, tragedies, and (in countries of Spanish speech, when they exist) bandits, are deemed subjects profitable to be sung round the streets of Madrid and other cities by blind beggars, for whom a tribe of beggarly rhymesters works. The civil war has already produced its *Romancero*, though of little merit. Humble as most of the vulgar ballads are, there are some not devoid of wit or vigour. The eighteenth-century *Miller of Arcos* suggested to Pedro Antonio de Alarcón his *Sombrero de tres Picos* ('three-cornered hat'), which Russian dancers have carried to most parts of Europe.

The old historical ballads treated of civil wars in the Guadalquivir valley or frontier skirmishes on the Granadine border: they were thus specifically Andalusian. The epic themes belonged

originally to Old Castile, and it may have been Old Castile that transformed them into ballads. The original focus of Spanish balladry was thus Castile in the widest sense, the whole area embraced between Burgos and Sevilla. It was from here that the national themes broadened outward. Study of the melodies shows a certain dichotomy between the more European style of the north and the more Oriental luxuriance of the south; it shows also that southern tunes have penetrated northward. As for the ballads which are not indigenous, a geographical study<sup>1</sup> has shown how they advanced in waves of versions and variants from the south or south-east to the north-west, isolating older forms and confining them to the remoter regions.

Hence the importance for Spanish ballad study of the versions still preserved in the remoter regions: in Catalonia and Portugal (which require a place apart), in the Asturian mountains, in Spanish America, and among the exiled Balkan Jews.<sup>2</sup> The fire has burnt out in the original hearth, but the sparks are tended wherever any semblance of the old close communities still persists. The ballads of the Asturias are exceptionally rich in authentic texts; texts which may be used to emend the versions preserved for us by sixteenth-century collectors. There has, it is true, been some loss in topics and style. The lyrical element has increased, the narratives have become predominantly novelesque. Historical ballads are perishable, and if they survive it is for their entertainment value alone. One frontier ballad is known in the Asturias, none in the Balkans, but five among the highly conservative Jews of Morocco. The murder of the Master of Santiago is still retold in the Asturias and Morocco, but the others of the series have gone. On the other hand, the deaths of Prince Afonso and the Duke of Gandía are still remembered. The ancient literary ballads derived from Spanish or French sources have been severely thinned out by time, but adventure stories are numerous, together with those of Biblical and pious origin.

Amid all these losses, one is impressed by the faithfulness of ballad tradition. The Jews are exiles, with every reason to hate the

<sup>1</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, 'Sobre geografía folklórica', *Revista de Filología Española*, vii, 1920.

<sup>2</sup> R. Menéndez Pidal, 'El romancero judío-español' and 'Los romances en América' in *El Romancero*, Madrid, 1927; J. M. de Cossío and T. Maza, *Romancero popular de la Montaña*, Santander, 1933-4; R. Gil, *Romancero judeo-español*, Madrid, 1911.

land which rejected them; they follow a different religion, and their language has been corrupted by the intrusion of Balkan and Hebrew words. They have a limited number of pieces for use on ritual occasions, and their own ballads about Moses, Adam, Dinah, Goliath, Tamar, Absalom, and Solomon; but there has been no systematic hebraizing of their inheritance. The ballad persons go to mass. The Cid is a hero, the Moor an enemy, even to people who have been sheltered by Moors and rejected by Christians. So it is among the Jews of Morocco that we encounter the end of the ballad of *Count Arnaldos*, though unwelcome, together with a new ballad of the frontier, *Portocarrero*. From the Asturias we learn how the ballad of Don Fadrique's death originally opened. The Balkan Jews tell us enough about *Count Vélez bragged* to let us know that it belongs to the same family as *Marianson's Rings* and the story of Imogen and Iachimo. Conservative as they are, these regions also illustrate the traditional freedom of the minstrel. The versions of old ballads rise to scores, variants of texts to hundreds, and the total store of ballads—still mostly uncounted—mounts to many thousands.

The ballads of Portugal<sup>1</sup> differ from those of the Spanish regions only by the change of language. It is not so much a change as a transformation. The two tongues are so closely similar that in most cases a Portuguese word has the same prosodic value as a Castilian, and the Castilian term need only be pronounced in a Portuguese manner to become Portuguese. This was the first step in translation: substitution. There remain some incompatible forms. Such forms tend to survive in both Portuguese and Catalan ballads, at least for a while; but they are naturally more infrequent in Portuguese texts than in Catalan, which has a rhythm so different from Castilian. Lisbon is the centre of a new scattering of ballads. Just as those of Castile have spread to the circumference of the Spanish sphere, so some of the richest gleanings in Portugal have been made in the conservative region of Traz-os-Montes and the distant Azores. The texts are consistently more modern than in Spanish, and have suffered some new applications. These may prove misleading. Almeida Garrett, encountering a piece which began

I came by sea from Hamburg,

and describing a Christian captive in Moslem hands, supposed

<sup>1</sup> T. Braga, *Romanceiro geral português*, 3 vols., Lisbon, 1906-9.

that the theme referred to some raid by Sallee Rovers in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries; but, in fact, the words merely adapt to modern uses

My father came from Ronda,  
my mother from Antequera.

For various reasons an erroneous opinion is current, at least among English scholars, that the Portuguese *Romanceiro* belongs to the Franco-Italian-Catalan group of lyrical balladries, distinct from the severely epical manner of Castile. It was natural that Almeida Garrett, the Walter Scott of Peninsular balladry, should be impressed by the novelty of the versions he collected, while yet the 'romancero' was insufficiently appreciated in Spain. Teófilo Braga devoted his bizarre erudition to explaining the international affiliations of his collection. He came to some queer conclusions, such as the supposed existence of a Portuguese 'Odysseian' cycle about a supposed 'Nausicaa'; but his work had a sound core in the use he made of Nigra's *Canti popolari piemontesi*. Hence Braga's *Romanceiro* offers a serious study of the international adventure ballads current in Portugal, and such ballads are of French origin. Only perfunctory attention was given to this matter by Menéndez y Pelayo in his *Tratado de los Romances Viejos*. Spanish scholars have been concerned with the historical and national matter of their 'romancero', which is still not entirely explained; the theory of epic origin has turned their eyes away from poems which have evidently no root in national epics. But this national and epical matter is, as we have seen, the most perishable. It cannot easily be exported to another country. It is the adventure ballads that survive and travel, and these adventure ballads are, as we have seen, borne on a stream of French influence. But they are borne into Spain as much as into Portugal, and the Portuguese versions are identical in form and content with, and later in detail than, the Castilian. They are, therefore, still constituent parts of the Castilian-Portuguese sub-group of Romanic ballads.

Penetration began in the sixteenth century. Political poetry existed in Portugal from a much earlier date. In the War of Liberation (1384 ff.) we hear of short lyrical snatches in scorn of the Castilians or in praise of the Holy Constable, but no ballads. They are a popular and vulgar development of the courtly satires formerly composed by such troubadours as Airas Nunes de



Santiago. The death of Inés de Castro provided an admirable ballad theme, but no ballads. Garcia de Rêsende worked up the incident into the best poem published in his *Cancioneiro* (1516), but in stanzaic form. It seems to have been left to Castilians, with dim memories of the event and the persons, to reshape this episode into the cycle of *Doña Isabel de Liar*. The Balkan Jews have a ballad of *Gian Lorenzo*, dealing with the humiliation of João Lourenço da Cunha in the fourteenth century; but their ballad is in Castilian. The same observation holds for those on Prince Afonso's death in 1491.

It is possible to watch the introduction of the new form and the acclimatization of the 'romance'. Gil Vicente, writing between 1502 and 1536, a poet of exquisite sensibility, normally employs the Castilian language for his ballads, though with occasional lapses into Portuguese. The court at which he worked was undergoing an intense process of castilianization. Camões, active between 1546 and 1570, quotes ballads in Spanish, but writes none. The first place where we encounter a number of Portuguese ballads is in Jorge Ferreira de Vasconcellos's *Memorial of the Second Round Table*. Issued in 1567 but probably written about 1553, the book is a neo-Arthurian romance, composed after the Spanish model of *Amadís de Gaula*. At the date of its composition the principal Spanish *Cancioneros de Romances* were enjoying a wide circulation. From this date onwards the composition of ballads in Portuguese becomes an established literary manner.

The gift of Portugal to the Peninsular 'romancero' was Gil Vicente.<sup>1</sup> Whether he writes in Spanish or Portuguese, he writes with a simple directness so undefiled that his ballads are as familiar as those of oral tradition. A distinction cannot be made between his style and the best traditional pieces, whether these be Castilian 'romances' or Portuguese 'cossantes'; his use of material available to hand pervades his work, so that it is hard to say when he is remodelling traditional verse, when pouring out a new wealth of music. He reproduced the May song in his *Flérida and Duardos*, isolated from *King Búcar*, the Moorish lament for the loss of Valencia, which alone gives that ballad its charm, composed an exquisite ballad barcarole, and uttered ballad compliments in a tone of popular rejoicing. His ballads are only a part of his lyrical output, which is distinguished by the same exquisite sureness of

<sup>1</sup> *Lyrics of Gil Vicente*, edited and translated by A. F. G. Bell, London, 1925.

touch. Lope de Vega could do the same when he was willing, but he was less willing; the ostentation of the Philippine age creeps into his 'romances', which he cannot allow to speak for themselves. But the style of Vicente, like Burns, is of the same cloth as his sources, and goes to prove that the presence of a great name does not prevent poems in the appropriate style from becoming part of the traditional store.

#### 4. *Catalonia*

The Catalan language is closely related to Provençal by most of its traits and actually extends into Roussillon, north of the modern border; on the other side it merges into the Aragonese dialects of Spanish by a process of gradual change. During the Middle Ages, Barcelona served as the capital of a kingdom which pursued a Mediterranean policy of its own, and so held somewhat aloof from the development of Spanish unity under the aegis of Castile. The fifteenth century witnessed a movement of peaceful penetration by Castilian policies and culture, and at the close the kingdoms were brought together by the marriage of their sovereigns. Since 1516 Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearics have been integrated into Spain, without losing the sense of regional differences.

Thanks to these and other considerations Catalan balladry<sup>1</sup> requires a double classification. In its oldest texts it is a portion of the Franco-Provençal group; in its later forms it is Spanish. Between the two phases lie those ballads in mixed Spanish and Catalan which represent, at least in most cases, the penetration into Catalonia of the Castilian 'romancero'. Milá was disposed to carry back the history of the genre as far as the fourteenth century. There is no quite convincing evidence to support so early a date, since the first sure fact is that Jaume de Olesa possessed a mixed Catalan-Castilian version of *The Gentle Lady* about the year 1421.<sup>2</sup> The legendary date of the indigenous *Comte Arnau* is 1017; the ballad itself was recovered in the nineteenth century by Piferrer; but there is nothing to show when it arose, though on general grounds it is impossible to believe it as old as its matter. Count

<sup>1</sup> The best collection is M. Milá y Fontanals, *Romancerillo catalán*, 2nd ed., Barcelona, 1882, reprinted in his *Obras Completas*, vi, Barcelona, 1895. Milá's titles and explanations are in Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> E. Levi, 'El romance florentino de Jaume de Olesa', *Revista de Filología Española*, xiv, 1927; W. C. Atkinson, 'The Chronology of Spanish Ballad Origins', *Modern Language Review*, xxxii, 1937.

Arnold is, according to the ballad, an unforgivable sinner; in the dead of night he appears to his wife, and though she defends her children and her household, she cannot stop his grasping her and haling her away to hell with his burning hand. The legend is firmly fixed in the local traditions of Ripoll, and the count's house may be seen at Parnau on the road to Candevano. Apart from this case the dates to be inferred from ballads making historical allusions are relatively modern. *King François's Imprisonment* (Milá 80) is the French ballad on this subject, and shows traces in the language of its origin. *The Capture of Nice* (Milá 79) goes back to the same period, but the bulk of the historical ballads recorded by Milá lie between the separatist revolt of 1642 and the Carlist wars of last century. A similar range of dates lies behind the ballads of banditry, extending from the days of Serrallonga (fl. 1632-7) to the late eighteenth century. They are sometimes quite stirring adventures—as in the *Servant-girl* (Milá 114), who detected and captured disguised brigands in the inn—but there is a tendency to utter platitudes about the importance of a godly upbringing as a way of ultimately avoiding the gibbet.

We have to assign to Catalan ballads a history covering three epochs: from the early fifteenth century to the mid-sixteenth those of French cut prevail; from 1550, when the Castilian printed collections were in every man's hand, there was a period of intense castilianization; then come the vulgar and plebeian ballads of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not to be distinguished from those of the rest of Spain. Correspondences between Milá and Doncieux and Nigra are to be associated with the ballads of the first period, especially when supported by formal criteria. There are poems in metres based on the French decasyllable and alexandrine, and they obey the ruling that cadences of hemistichs must be different. In these pieces French words are not infrequent: words like 'xivall', 'arjant', 'boy', 'aymar' for 'cheval', 'argent', 'bois', 'aimer'. There are poems in the assonance *é*, corresponding to the French infinitive *er*, and the incorrections in usage show that these are foreign. One notes, too, that the word proper to these poems is 'cansó' (chanson), whereas 'romanso' means properly a ballad printed on a flying sheet. (Compare the Appalachian distinction between 'love song' and 'ballet'). This is an acknowledgement of the way in which the Castilian 'romances' penetrated Catalonia. The method of singing, according to Milá, transforms these poems

into couplets, since the first two are sung, then the second with the third, the third with the fourth, and so on. In Castilian pieces, or original work formed on the Castilian model, the rule as to cadences is ignored, and the verse is octosyllabic. There are, however, many poems which chance to have a masculine assonance while the other octosyllable is feminine. They include some of the most interesting international pieces to be found in the *Primavera y Flor de Romances* as well as in Catalonia, and their exact scansion has been a moot point since the days of Wolf and Hofmann. The modern method of making unequal lines equal in singing is to lengthen the accented syllable over two notes (as 'Gibraltaár'); the older method, attested in manuscripts of the Castilian epics, was to add a 'paragogic e' (as 'Gibraltaré'), and this would serve for the ballads in the *Primavera*. On consulting the music, however, we find that some of them were intended to be sung as syllabically unequal; that is to say in a manner foreign to Castile.<sup>1</sup> This circumstance, which should be further investigated, stresses the role of Catalonia in the transmission of foreign material to Castile, not merely from France, but also directly from Italy, and perhaps from yet farther afield.

<sup>1</sup> Pelay Briz, *Cansons de la Terra*, Barcelona, 1866, i, p. 105, shows this difference of cadence in the music of *The Students of Toulouse*, which is certainly French:

1 flat 34 U8: aa/d..édē/f (.e)d. aa/d..édē/c.r &c.

Salinas (1577) has a very simple tune for the Castilian *Rosa fresca* with the same peculiarity:

68 U8: ee/d.ef.e/d.cc ee/d.ef.e/d.r

From present-day tradition in Andalusia, E. Torner collected a setting of the same kind for *The Gentle Lady* (*Folklore y Costumbres*, Barcelona, 1931, ii, p. 29):

34 U8: e/aaǵ/a.ǵ/aǵ a/bcb/a.g/(fgf)e./er &c.

These lines are made equal not by the use of a paragoric e, but by the musical rest.

## II

### NORDIC BALLADS

#### 1. *General Considerations*

THE ballads of the north and centre of Europe belong to one vast store of methods and themes, and in their oldest forms they have the same background of ancient Germanic heroic poems and German-Latin political verse. The composers of these verses were often Saxons. Saxon court poets are said by Saxo Grammaticus to have been active in the Danish civil wars of the twelfth century, where they made verses about the battle of Haraldsted (1131) and the flight of King Svend (1157). They sang, no doubt, in Low German. It is possible to carry back the dates of historical Danish 'viser' to the year 1208 with certainty (*Battle of Lena*), and to the middle of the twelfth century with some hesitation (the death of Erik Emun, sung in one ballad, occurred in 1137). It is clear, therefore, that at the moment when the new ballad style developed in Denmark, Saxon singers were giving performances of a similar nature under the patronage of such kings as Knut Lavard; but it is not possible to say how the foreigners affected the 'viser', or even to assign to them an assured priority. In Saxon England there was a ferment of creation, of which the ballad of *Sir Aldingar* is one fruit. We are told that

Merie sungen the muneches binnen Ely  
tha Cnut ching reu ther by.  
'Roweth cnites noer the land  
and here we thes muneches sæng'.

The form is almost the form of a ballad, yet it is not a ballad. We are on surer grounds when we learn from William of Malmesbury that a song corresponding to *Sir Aldingar* was sung at the cross-roads of England in the middle years of the twelfth century. As for Germany, Flemish and Low German political pieces seem to have priority over those of Switzerland and Austria by something like a quarter of a century. They are not nearly as early as might have been expected. The unmistakable ballad note is not heard before the beginning of the fourteenth century, when Lippold defended his castle of Homboken against the Bishop of Hildesheim and Duke Otto of Brunswick.

In 1311

From Spiegelberg fast riding came  
 Lippold, a mighty warrior's name;  
 his sword, two ells and one half long,  
 was sharp, his harness bright and strong.

His helm weighed seven and half a pound,  
 with pearls bespattered and with gold,  
 his golden-gleaming shield was round,  
 he bestrode his horse in hosen bold.

He came to Brunswick, to the town,  
 at the Golden Lion gat him down;  
 he met his company, his own,  
 to every man was full well known.

'From Spiegelberg have I come here,  
 I bring you news of goodly cheer!  
 On us new-fangled fines they lay!  
 They all thought good what he did say!

(Liliencron 6.)

The common centre of these Nordic ballads, if there were one centre, would thus seem to have been the northern parts of Germany, and the first area of diffusion to have been the rim of land round the North Sea from Jutland to East Anglia. To the above indications we may add that the Low German *Dietrichs Saga*, now extant in an Old Norse translation of the early thirteenth century, is of peculiar importance for the transmission of epic material both to Scandinavia and to Germany. The similarity of style between Danish and German ballads is such as to suggest a common fount and origin, and there was undoubtedly at a later date a considerable influx of German ballads (such as *Tannhäuser*, *The Count of Rome*, and *The Castle in Austria*) into Denmark and Sweden. What the Saxon poet sang to Knut Lavard in 1131 was 'Grimhild's notorious treachery to her brothers', that is, the matter of the *Nibelung* epos. The same matter is repeated in the Danish ballad of *Grimhild's Revenge*, but as a much later borrowing from Germany.

On the other hand, there are considerable difficulties in the way of tracing the whole Nordic ballad effort to one original centre of inspiration. The chief of these is the lateness of the indubitably German ballads. The style declares itself in Denmark fully a century before it is certainly to be found in Germany. In the latter,

such a poem as the *Böhmenschlacht* (1298), though a political poem addressed to the widest possible audience, is not suited to traditional oral transmission and is not composed in any of the ballad metres. In England, evidence for the existence of known ballads in their present state is withheld until the fourteenth century, apart from the *Judas* manuscript of the thirteenth. The great bulk of songs held in common with Norway and Denmark is Scottish, and can be accounted for as a flow of ballads from Scandinavia to the ports of Aberdeenshire and Fife. When we compare the standard collections of Child, Erk and Böhme, and Grundtvig, the priority in time and merit of Danish balladry is indubitable, and it would be rash to set up against this weight of testimony the inferences drawn from debatable texts. Confining ourselves to the evidence, we find two great groups of Nordic ballads: the older Anglo-Scandinavian group which is best represented in Denmark, and the somewhat younger German corpus.

Some scholars, while admitting the relative modernity of the extant ballads, have sought to carry back their history to a much earlier date by means of a genealogy running up to the primitive epics and the political songs of the ninth and tenth centuries. There is the old *Hildebrandslied* of the ninth century, and the ballad *Hildebrand* of much later date. They differ in one important point, namely that the more modern poem has a happy ending. This happy ending occurs in the chapter of the thirteenth-century *Thiðrekssaga* which tells the same story. Two explanations are clearly possible: either the old *Hildebrandslied* continued to be sung and to undergo modifications until it became the modern ballad, the *Thiðrekssaga* witnessing one of the intermediate forms; or the *Thiðrekssaga* (in its lost Low German form) took up and modified the old poem, possibly from a manuscript, and was itself in turn the source of the younger *Hildebrand*. To the latter explanation I incline because of the undoubted influence of this saga on all the Danish ballads concerning Theodoric; the saga, in fact, is a literary source of the ballads and interrupts the epic tradition. Among the older political poems, the piece most relevant to ballad origins is the anonymous *Ludwigslied*. It was written by a Frankish author to celebrate Ludwig III's victory at Saucourt in 881, and before the king's death in 882. The metre is that used for religious themes by Otfrid, and the style is definitely clerical. The author wishes to draw a moral, that sins lead to defeat and repentance to

victory. In the excitement of combat, however, his tone becomes epical in its directness and vigour:

Song was sung,            battle begun,  
blood shone on cheeks,    spied there the Franks.

The same event gave rise also to the French epic of *Gormond and Isebart*. So far as the *Ludwigslied* is concerned, it is not a ballad since its transmission is not through tradition nor is its style ballad-like; its affinities with secular poetry are rather with epics than ballads. Still less ballad-like are the *Modus Ottinc* and *De Henrico* and other poems of the same sort. In Denmark the *Bjarkamál* and *Starkaðsmál*, in England the *Battle of Maldon* and (to a less extent) *Brunanburh*, are epical compositions of late date and style which show how far the epics had evolved immediately before the rise of the new ballad manner.

A metrical argument for connecting the Nordic ballads with the preceding epics rests, I believe, on a misunderstanding. Throughout all this area there is no way of applying syllable-count to ballad verse. It is measured by four accents, two on each side of a pause, which may be the end of a line or of a hemistich. Thus it corresponds to the four-accent principle of heroic Germanic verse, and differs from the syllabic manner of Romance balladry. Lines are bound together by rhyme, or rather assonance; but whereas in Romance territory the assonances are adequate, in Nordic balladry they are fleeting and elusive. The most distant similarities suffice. Sometimes there is no correspondence of sound at all. This elusiveness is so omnipresent that we must suppose it a source of pleasure to the hearers. Listeners did not want to hear the clang of identical sounds at regular intervals; they preferred echoes. They preferred to echo not only the ends of words but also the beginnings. Nordic balladry is full of alliteration, though this does not occur according to the fixed rules of the older epic technique. While all this is true, however, it does not amount to proof that the ballad and epic metres are essentially one. It is merely evidence that when the new rhymed or assonating and measured verses came from France, the shift to a new technique was made in England, Denmark, and Germany with caution. Poets were slow to surrender the charm of alliteration, though ready to drop its fetters, and they preferred approximate to rigid equivalence in their lines. The lines have, none the less, a new



sort of regularity and a new principle of cohesion, which is assonance.

The two great Nordic groups—the Anglo-Scandinavian and the German—are fundamentally lyrical. It is to the lyric that they owe their stanzaic form, which marks them off sharply from the continuous narrative verse of Spain, Greece, Serbia, Rumania, or Russia. It does not mark them off from Franco-Italian ballads which, as we have seen, also rise out of the lyric. There is considerable common ground between the ballads and folk-songs of France and those of Germany, as well as a direct influence of troubadour themes and style in such poems as *Tannhäuser*, which is formally an 'aubade'. The specifically English parts of Child's collection are also heavily in the debt of France. The lyric, then, has given the stanzaic form of Nordic balladry, but, especially in older medieval instances, the stanzas are used for objective narrative. This is especially the case with Danish ballads; in Germany, on the other hand, lyrical treatment becomes more and more prominent as the centuries pass, and the present-day soldiers' ballads are almost entirely subjective. A formal distinction between the German and Anglo-Scandinavian ballads is that the former were composed to be sung or recited, probably by one person entertaining a group, but the latter were designed to be danced while a preceptor chanted the narrative verses. A refrain or double refrain characterizes Anglo-Scandinavian ballads, and is the part sung by the dancers as they pause between two movements. So characteristic is this in Scandinavia that absence of refrain in a Danish ballad is good ground for suspecting German provenience. Our own practice fluctuates. Specifically Scottish ballads have often Scandinavian affinities and are adorned with a refrain; though it is not certain that they were always danced. In England a recitative style seems to have been customary.

All these northern balladries have for common background the Germanic epos and the older achievements of French literature, both epical and lyrical. The relationship between epos and ballad has been discussed in an earlier chapter, but it has its place here also, and demands attention even at the risk of some repetition. We know from Jordanes, writing early in the sixth century, that 'songs of an almost historical sort' were current among the Goths. He has indicated some of the heroes and subjects. There were songs about Eterpamara, Hanale, Fridigern, and Vidigoia, of whom the last-

named is the Vidga of the *Thidrekssaga*, and the Vidrik Verlandsson of Danish ballads. He knew an important poem about Filimer and the wanderings of the Goths, and what he tells us concerning Ermanaric is coloured with poetry. Similarly, Paulus Diaconus reproduces poetical legends of the Lombards, and Saxo Grammaticus those of the Danes. The Italian ballad of *Donna Lombarda*, with the whole dependent cycle of ballads of poisoning, derives probably, directly or indirectly, from Paulus Diaconus, who was a favourite historian of the middle ages. In all this activity curiously little corresponds to the Germans of Germany proper. There is ambiguity in the use of the adjective 'deutsch' by German critics, since it has the two senses of what is nationally, and what is racially, German. These ancient epics were the property of all the Northern peoples, and particularly of those who were most violently agitated by the great migrations. The more important of these peoples penetrated into Roman territory and became latinized. Those on the northern fringe—the Saxons, Danes, and Norsemen—remained Germanic in language and part of their culture, and it is among them that we find the most authentic survivals of the old poetry.

What form may have clothed Jordanes' songs we cannot know. The oldest, and only complete, ancient Germanic epic is the Saxon *Beowulf* which, in its present form, bears marks of composition in the seventh century.<sup>1</sup> The *Beowulf* preserves authentic traditions of the fifth and sixth centuries. What is peculiar to the seventh-century author is the tinge of Christianity and the elegiac mood; in other respects, and particularly in style and form, he may have remained true to the epic manner of his predecessors. It has become customary to accuse him of longueurs, to contrast his style with the more rapid manner of the *Finnsburg* and *Waldere* fragments. But the author of *Beowulf* is not always dilatory; in passages that describe action he can be as rapid as any. The fragments called into comparison are, as it happens, descriptive of episodes of intense activity; they are not necessarily conclusive as to how the same authors would treat scenes of high revelry or incidental episodes. What we learn in the *Beowulf* concerning the complete plot of the *Finnsburg* poem suggests that this may have had a considerable length—in the neighbourhood of 2,000 lines more or less. There was evidently a great wealth of episodes. Similarly the

<sup>1</sup> R. Girvan, *Beowulf and the Seventh Century*, London, 1935.

Latin *Waltharius*, of the tenth century, is a poem of some length. The style is delayed at places by the use of Latin clichés, but in other places it is sober and bare where one would expect Germanic clichés. The Anglo-Saxon evidence, therefore, tends to indicate that the 'songs of an almost historical sort' were not ballads but short epics, suited to recitation in the long evenings of winter in the great banqueting halls. So Beowulf himself is represented as entertaining the court of Hrothgar in Heorot.

Of these pieces only the poems of Walter have given rise to ballads, thanks to their coalescing with various old French novelistic poems. The German *Hildebrandslied* is a younger poem, dating from the ninth century and now extant in a mixed dialect. Hildebrand is a hero of only one achievement; he fights with, and conquers, his son. That is a very widespread motif, one which only requires to be capped by names. There is little to compel us to believe that the song of Hildebrand preserved any authentic tradition of the Goths of Verona, or that it was other than a composition by some ninth-century German poet. The episode was incorporated in the Low German *Dietrichs Saga*, of the late twelfth century, where it has the optimistic ending later to characterize the German ballad. While the evidence is not conclusive, it is at least arguable that there is no direct contact between the epic fragment and the ballad in this case, but that the episode came to the ballad-poet through the mediation of the saga. This saga was translated in the early thirteenth century into Old Norse, and in that form is the undoubted source of the Danish ballads of Diderik and Vidrik Verlandssøn, some of the most stirring in the collection. Rather than an authentic Germanic tradition, the legend of Dietrich von Bern is an encyclopedia of Germanic adventure, assembled in the late twelfth century, not without assistance from the Carolingian and Arthurian models.

In the *Beowulf* we find a sketch of the plot of the Nibelung story before the invention of Siegfried-Sigurd. Sigurd is the hero of a number of lays in the older *Edda* which are either episodic or summary. They resemble ballads in these two respects, and in their anonymity, but they differ in their aristocratic appeal. They are the property of trained reciters who will respect their texts, not of amorphous tradition. We have, in these lays, specimens of a last epoch of northern alliterative verse, approximating to the ballad style which was to rise in the twelfth century in Denmark, but later

in the neighbouring countries. Appeal has been made to the Eddic lays to determine the form of the primitive Germanic epos. They are brief, nervous, and highly dramatic. But these qualities may well be secondary. The Eddic poems are not self-explanatory; on the contrary the prose introductions are designed to set each of them in their context in some larger traditional narrative. Two traditions, indeed, are mentioned, the one as current in the north, the other as from Germany. What the poets have done is to pick out salient episodes of the pre-existing tradition, and to realize to the full their dramatic possibilities; they have also, in the *Átlamál* and *Átlakviða*, offered summaries of the intensely dramatic conclusion of the poem. These Eddic lays, alone or in combination with sagas (*Thiðrekssaga*, *Völsungasaga*), have given rise to Danish and Faeroese ballads of the Nibelung cycles. Similarly, the Eddic *Svipdagsmál* is the source of the Danish *Ungen Svejðal*, the poetical fragments of the *Hervararsaga* are the source of the ballad *Alf af Odderskær*, and there is a resemblance between the second *Helgi* lay and the tragic poem of *Ribold and Guldborg* (*The Douglas Tragedy*). One Eddic poem of a religious cast has had ballad consequences. This is the *Thrymskviða*. The Danish *Tord af Havsgaard* is so faithful a transposition of this lay into the ballad style, that the transposer must have had the very words of the *Edda* ringing in his ears. The older *Edda* is, therefore, a mediator between the primitive epics and the medieval ballads.

Other mediators were the refashioned and amplified German epics of the twelfth century. Their authors have profited by the technical advances of the French jongleurs. They show a new amplitude, a new skill in weaving episodes, a new eloquence, and a new decorative art. The *Nibelungenlied* and *Kudrún* are many times longer than their originals, thanks to the accretion of new material and to the more developed art of story-telling. The former affects the Faeroese ballads of this cycle, modifying the details offered by the *Edda*; it is also the direct source of the important Danish ballad of *Grimhild's Vengeance*, which is in the debt of the *Thiðrekssaga* as well. As for *Kudrún*, its essential episode is the recognition of a lost sister by a brother while she was washing clothes beside the sea. Various misrepresentation, this episode figures in the German ballads of *Südeli* and others, and in the Spanish *Don Bueso*. The epic itself is the most likely source, but the evidence is not close enough to exclude the possibility

that the ballads may rely on the sources of the epic. Other reconditioned German epics have had ballad consequences in Germany: the *Hugdietrich* and *Wolfdietrich*, *Biterolf* and others. The influence of *Ortnit* and *Hugdietrich*, and possibly of the *Thidrekssaga*, has extended also into Russia.

In the Scandinavian North also, ballads have drawn heroic material from literary works in a relatively recent manner. These are the sagas. The *Hervararsaga* has already been mentioned. *Ragnar Loðbrokssaga*, though late and somewhat puffy, was a favourite with ballad-makers in Denmark and Norway. Norwegian balladry shows a considerable number of pieces taken from the less-known sagas, and in the Faeroe Islands this method of augmenting the people's repertoire was well established. One such, *Ormurin langi*, was rough-hewed from *St. Olaf's Saga* last century, though the style is wholly that of old traditional ballads.

Summing up, then, we notice that the primitive Germanic epics form the background of both German and Scandinavian balladry, but they are not immediate sources. The immediate sources are in Scandinavia the older *Edda* and the heroic sagas, while more recent sagas affect the ballads of Norway and the Faeroes. In Germany the immediate sources are the lost *Dietrich* compilation (probably for both the *Hildebrand* and the freely composed *Ermanaric's Death*) and the reconditioned epics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Danish ballad of *Hagbard and Signe* is not easy to place. There does not appear to be any mediating saga. Saxo Grammaticus gives a number of Latin renderings of a Danish poem which was more circumstantial than the extant ballad.

English balladry is quite without these epic contacts. From the tenth century England was assimilating the Romance culture of France, and her epic traditions were fading from memory. In the eleventh she was overrun by the romanized Normans. Her writers contributed to French literature, and during the whole Middle Ages much French literature was composed by subjects of the English Crown. It is therefore not surprising to note that, in place of Germanic epical traditions, Child's collection shows, in the specifically English pieces, a double dose of ballads dependent on French romance. The Arthurian motif is prominent: *The Boy and the Mantle*, *King Arthur and King Cornwall*, *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*, *King Henry*. Then we have *Hind Horn*, *King John and the*

*Bishop, King Estmere, Sir Cawline, Lady Diamond, Blancheflour and Jellyflorice*. The first is related to the German *Moringer* cycle; among the others there are some which may be romances invented by the ballad poet. The style of all these ballads is only semi-popular. The poet is consciously displaying his powers of invention and narration, and the whole group is scarcely to be distinguished, save on the ground of length, from the 'tail-rhyme' romances, like *Athelston* and Chaucer's burlesque *Sir Thopas*, which formed the staple of public entertainment in England. These romances are much less prevalent in Scottish balladry, which is distinguished for its close association with Denmark and Norway.

The influence of French romance was exerted strongly on Flanders and the Netherlands in the German ballad area, and from thence spread to the rest of the territory. There is the usual *Flos and Blancflos*. The troubadour biography of Guilhem de Cabestan, which occurs also in the French twelfth-century romance of the *Castellan de Coucy*, gives material for the Flemish and Low German ballad of *Brennenberg*. The *Tristan* legend is reflected in the German *Liebestod*. One notices also, especially in Flanders, the influence of the later French popular songs. There are many which reproduce the cynical French view of marriage, describing amorous intrigues in which the offender is held up for admiration, or in which he is a monk or other religious person. The motif of the vivandière, always popular in France, is also encountered in the Netherlands. It is a military motif. Among what may be called songs of the professions—that is, songs in which the composer is stated to be of some particular profession or status—Germany has greatly developed those of the soldiery. First the songs of reiters and landsknechts in the sixteenth century, then the songs of the religious wars, and later the conscript lyrics of modern times.

The influence of literary conventions fixed by the troubadours and trouvères is also noticeable, particularly in the ballad use of the 'aubade'. Both *Tannhäuser* and *The noble Moringer* have the opening proper to an 'aubade', and that is true also of the ballad refashioning of Pyramus and Thisbe (*Abendgang*). This is the less surprising, since it is clear that both Minnesang and Meistersang have affected the composition of love ballads. *Tannhäuser* and Heinrich von der Morung were poets about whom ballads were composed, and *Duke Ernest, The Knight from Steiermark, The Count of Rome, &c.*, are 'master-songs' turned ballads. The literary

influence of High Germany on the whole ballad production of the nation is as marked as the specifically national ballads of the Swiss.

Scandinavia, lying at a farther remove from the focus of western civilization, was less strongly and directly affected by French influences, though we must not rule out the possibility of immediate contact by sea. The sea route doubtless brought to Denmark the matter of *The Short Straw* (*La Courte Paille*), represented in England only by Thackeray's *Little Billee*, but known in France, Catalonia, Spain, and Portugal. More often, however, the French material was conveyed through Germany or England. Through England came the Carolingian compendium, the *Karlamagnussaga*, and the story of *Tristan*. There is a Norse *Roland og Magnus Kongin* and a fragment on Roncesvalles, and six Faeroese ballads in Hammershaimb's collection systematically excavated from the prose compilation. Ballads on the death of Tristan are known in Iceland and the Faeroes. More important, however, was the knowledge of the *Enfances Ogier de Dinamarche* which seems to have reached Denmark by way of Low Germany. This gave rise to a most popular ballad, *Olger Danske og Burmand*, which reproduced the material in free fashion. Olger was felt to be a compatriot; Burmand a foreigner, and probably a German. That the ballad signified something important was made clear by the fact that its refrain was cut into the wood of a Swedish church in the fifteenth century. When Olger's enemy was stated to be Diderik af Bern, in another ballad freely modelled on the style of the *Thiðrekssaga*, the superiority of the Danish champion to the representative of German might was made patent. A primitive epic had sung of the defence of that border by Offa; in the fourteenth century, the historical ballad of Niels Ebbesøn is to the same effect. But somehow, the legendary feat of Olger Danske was felt to be more symbolic, and this was the ballad chanted by the Danes who manned the Danneverk in 1864.

With this knowledge of the common background of Northern balladry and its different perspectives, we may go on to state what are the relations between the various subdivisions. The unity of the Scandinavian group is at once apparent, as also the priority of Denmark in general. The historical series is particularly well developed in that country, and Sweden shares in some of these ballads. Denmark and Sweden thus form a particularly close group. Norwegian ballads stand farther off; they contain many

independent reminiscences of the sagas. There are also Norse ballads like the famous *Axel and Valborg* which have extended over the whole Scandinavian area, including Denmark. In Iceland the 'viser' are a relatively late importation, which has not proved entirely congenial. The stories arrive in evolved forms from Denmark or Norway. They have then to withstand the competition of the local 'rímur', excavated from written sources like some ballads, with their elaborate alliteration and kennings. This sharpness of wit in the 'rímur' was truly congenial to the Icelanders, so that the naïve 'viser' remained few and insignificant. The Faeroese ballads seem to have arisen by the example of Iceland, but they firmly established themselves in popular favour. One unfailing source of supply has been Icelandic sagas, the prose of which has been cut by Faeroese improvisers into verse length. They drew also on Denmark directly, as may be seen in such bilingual pieces as *The Nix's Ballad* (Hammershaimb, *Anthologi*, 3). Scandinavian settlers in America have composed new ballads in the old manner.

With the ballads of Scandinavia go our own ballads. Our ballads are divided between England and Scotland, but it would not be practicable to form two collections. They are, when compared to those of Denmark, late and deficient in some categories, such as the epic. The ballads of Scotland are the most closely associated with Scandinavia, those on general themes are normally Norse or Danish ballads acclimatized in our island. They are marked by the use of refrain, though one cannot be certain they were danced. In England, on the contrary, there is a strong French influence, associated with a more definitely narrative technique. Yet *Sir Aldingar* is English, but is one of our most striking ties with Denmark; and the ballad cycle of Robin Hood is exactly paralleled by that of Marsk Stig. The old stores of English and Scottish balladry have travelled with their tunes to the United States, where they are collected by modern investigators among the mountaineers of Virginia and the Carolinas. These settlers have created new ballads in the old style, which is represented also by such offshoots as the ballads of cowboys and negroes.

German ballads form a separate group. They are stanzaic in form, but seem always to have been designed for recitation, and refrains are exceptional. There are numerous instances of borrowing and lending, but there is no such identity of details as exists in



the different forms of a Scandinavian ballad or even between Scandinavia and Scotland. The influence of France is differently exerted, and more directly; the epical ballads depend on re-fashioned German epics, not on sagas or the *Edda*. The ballads of Low Germany are older and more international; from High Germany a powerful literary influence was exerted by the Minnesingers and Mastersingers, and Switzerland is the home of patriotic military narratives. The use of narrative is more marked in the Middle Ages; later ballads become more lyrical, and personal or domestic. These later characteristics mark the ballads of countries dependent on the German creative urge, which was exerted in three different directions towards the east. In a south-easterly direction the German ballad type of construction and theme penetrated Czechoslovakia and Hungary about the fifteenth century; beyond Hungary the Rumanians learned to assonate in couplets, though they owe inspiration chiefly to their Balkan neighbours. In an easterly direction, the ballads of the Lusatian Wends are German in form, partly in music, and (in all international ballads) in content and exposition. Rhyming couplets and quatrains are found in Polish Galicia, in the narrative verse of the Ruthenians. Their kinsmen of the Ukraine adopted this same style in place of the more irregular verse of the 'byliny' and 'dumi'. It was a substitution of the western assonance and themes for the indigenous tradition, and a break with the old poetry of Kiev, which has since survived only outside the Ukraine. To the north-east the German influence is notable in the almost purely lyrical verse of Poland proper. It extends into Lithuania and Latvia, where themes are lyrical and personal or domestic; where assonance is abundant, but too sporadic to be a principle of versification, and where the construction is (thanks to parallelism) definitely stanzaic. In Latvia these stanzas are often reduced to one, so that there is no repetition to show that the construction is stanzaic; the length of the line is normally of eight syllables. In Finland and Esthonia, popular traditional poetry employs eight-syllable unrhymed lines upon themes generally domestic or personal, with casual assonance and abundant alliteration. Parallelism is used to form groups of lines of approximately equal numbers, though there are no stanzas. The singers are now peasants and fishers, as in Lithuania, but there is abundant evidence that their art came at some earlier date from the coastal towns, where German influence was strong. In Finland these

towns have been occupied for centuries by people of Swedish descent. There is a younger sort of ballad poetry current in that country, using typical Scandinavian verse-forms. Even in the older balladry the word 'runo' recalls the Scandinavian runes, and the principle of alliteration is probably Scandinavian. Other words used for Finnish poetry are also of foreign origin, such as 'viisi' which is the German 'Weise' or Swedish 'visa', and 'virs' which is the Latin 'versus'; the native word is 'laulu'.

In this chapter, therefore, I shall attempt to describe the ballads of the Northern nations in the order of their age and relationships. The oldest extant are the Danish, with the closely associated balladries of the Scandinavian lands. More remotely connected with these come next the English and Scottish ballads, with their important extension in the United States. Thirdly, there are the ballads of Germany, and then those of the lands inspired by her: Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Lusatia and Poland with the Ukraine, and the Baltic lands in their two linguistic groups.

## 2. *Scandinavia*

Danish ballads are the most copious and authentic examples of a class which extends over the whole Scandinavian North, and which is fully represented in the balladry of Scotland. The word most commonly used to describe these ballads is 'vise', though it is not in any special sense appropriate. In Germany the word occurs chiefly when one thinks of the tunes (Weise). In Norway and Iceland the preference is for equivalents of the Danish 'kvæde' 'lay, chant', and the refrain of the 'vise' in Denmark is called the 'omkvæd'. These terms, therefore, do not signify more than chanting, or a manner of so doing, while the refrain is a round-chant. Nearly all 'viser' are adorned with refrains, which are but loosely attached to the subject-matter of the ballad. They may occur at the end of the stanza, whether distich or quatrain, or they may be double and inserted between lines of recitative. It is seldom that these refrains amount to more than lyrical ejaculations, though in the late balladry of the Faeroes they are occasionally extended to several lines. Another device frequently employed by the 'viser' is the repetition of the narrative by the chorus of dancers. The precentor sings a distich. The chorus repeats the last word or two of the first line and all the second, and then the precentor sings a second distich. A description of the performance has been given

in the appropriate chapter of the first part of this book. Some one who is famed for memory and voice sings the narrative lines of the ballad, while the dancers move in a chain or ring, holding hands. They halt and chant the refrain before moving in the other direction. The scene of these dances, before they descended to humble barns, was the noble garth. They were a fit entertainment for the gentry, who led the movements, and a spectacle for kings. They were, however, and remain in the Faeroes, essentially local and communal in character. The subjects might be international or national, but the treatment and outlook were invariably circumscribed by the interests and requirements of a community closely linked with the soil.

Collection and publication of Danish ballads began in a good epoch. The hundred which A. S. Vedel presented to Queen Sophia, at her request, in 1591, belonged to a period when the medieval treasures of song were still unimpaired and when creation was still active. The husband of Vedel's patroness lives in the 'viser' for his exploits in Dittmarschen. The collector, it is true, was not above correcting his originals; yet Vedel's emendations have themselves become traditional. A second hundred were gathered by Peder Syv in 1695, while reprinting Vedel's pieces. Taking manuscript evidence into account, Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbek reproduced 222 ballads and a number of tunes in 1812-14. Theirs was still the epoch of amateur editing. The whole science of ballad study was altered by Sven Grundtvig in the great collection which began to see the light in 1853. Grundtvig would neither 'improve' his originals nor yield to the temptation to make a 'critical' edition. He realized that every version and variant of a tradition has its own authority. Mere variants—small verbal alterations—could be grouped in footnotes, with appropriate acknowledgements; but each version of a ballad—involving changes of some moment—must stand intact beside the other versions. The editor copied manuscripts with the strictest faithfulness, and drew both on oral tradition and on that of the other Scandinavian peoples. He himself collected the folk-songs of Iceland and the Faeroes. For Sweden he could rely on the work of Afzelius and Geijer and that of Arwidsson; for Norway, on Landstad. To each ballad he prefixed an essay ranging over the whole of the relevant European evidence. Curiously enough one of the most fruitful sources for improving Grundtvig's work was one very

near to hand: the oral tradition of his own countrymen. E. T. Kristensen found many an old ballad still alive in Jutland, still sung to an ancient melody. With this material and his own expert knowledge Axel Olrik expanded Grundtvig's work from five to nine volumes.<sup>1</sup>

We obtain some idea of the state of poetry immediately antecedent to the 'viser' by consulting the prose of Saxo Grammaticus. His *Historia Danica* was commenced, at the instigation of Archbishop Absalom, about the year 1185, and completed after his patron's death, about 1208. As sources for his work Saxo drew on many poetical compilations, some of which he reproduces in Latin verse. The glance of a historian is directed backwards. We need not suppose that strictly contemporary verses received a ready welcome from Saxo, so that his silence as to the 'viser' is not necessarily evidence against them. He certainly does give an inventory of the older verses bearing on history and mythology which were accessible to men of his time. The rise of the 'viser' corresponds with the fundamental change in prosody from alliteration to assonance, and this change must have taken place during the twelfth century. But much of the older alliterative poetry continued to be heard, and with such frequency and acceptance that it has been transformed into 'viser'. It is not necessary to believe that such ballads are the oldest of their kind. The change could occur at any date at which the old heroic poems were still remembered. They are of the oldest lineage, however, and contain embedded in them archaisms of thought and language.

The poetic *Edda* circulated freely. The extant Codex Regius is a somewhat fortuitous collection of such poems, and we have to take into account not only the pieces contained in that manuscript, but also others often grouped by critics as *Eddica minora*. The mythological poems, however, were already outmoded. Though highly dramatic, they are not well suited to become narratives, and their paganism had become an offence. The ballads draw only on the *Thrymskviða*, the most human of all the Eddic mythological poems. The god is transformed into a heroic farmer, and his associates might almost be bonders. Names of ritual significance are not remembered or are confused, and the divine or gigantic aspects of the action are not underlined. So the ballad of *Tord af Havsgaard* (DGF 1), well known in Denmark, Sweden, and Nor-

<sup>1</sup> See Note G, p. 387.

way, survives because of its broad humour, having shed the subtlety of the original poet, whose pleasure it was to shoot barbed arrows of wit against his gods. A pagan appeals to 'Oden Asagrim' in the Swedish *Proud Sir Alf* (Arwidsson 2), but otherwise the gods are unknown to ballad-mongers in Scandinavia. The vaguer underworld of elves, nixes, trolls, and sprites persisted in the imagination of men, and gave to the 'viser' their shuddering dread of the supernatural. In Norway particularly, where the conditions of life are peculiarly forbidding, ballads of malicious trolls and kobolds are so numerous as to constitute a distinguishing mark of the region.

If the first half of the literature represented by the Codex Regius had little influence on the ballads, the second entered almost intact. The adventures of Sigurd and Gunhild have given rise to traditional ballads which are doubtless but the residue of a more copious older corpus. In the *Edda* the poets already handle that saga episodically; the ballads follow suit, using the same episodes. In matters of detail the German *Nibelungenlied* brought corrections and variations which were used to modify the tradition in and behind the *Edda*. The second lay of *Helgi* runs close to a ballad, the *Svipdagsmál* is assuredly a source of *Ungen Svezdal* (DGF 70), and the *Waking of Angantyr* (among the *Eddica minora*) of *Angelfyr and Helmer Kamp* (DGF 19). Saxo tells this story in his fifth book, and in the seventh he devoted many paragraphs to the tragic history of *Hagbard and Signe*, rendering the vernacular verse in various Latin metres. Saxo gives us the proper dynastic pomp and circumstance; the ballad poet (DGF 20) seizes on the picturesque detail that this unwanted wooer should have penetrated to Signe's chamber in a female garb, and on the tragic tableau of his death, hanged before her eyes. Known also in Sweden (Bergström 22), the story was familiar in a highly generalized form in Germany (Erk-Böhme 140) and Flanders (Hoffmann von Fallersleben 14). Saxo relates old legends of Skjöld and Hrolf Kraki which have not given rise to ballads. He puts into hexameters the *Bjarkamál*, which was sung in the vernacular to St. Olaf on the morning of the battle of Stiklastad (1030). That poem, and the later *Starkaðsmál*, belong to an age of transition. They are concerned with heroic defences against desperate odds. Bjarki, who is the counterpart of our own Beowulf, defended the hall of Lejre while it blazed behind him. He displayed the narrow heroic virtues and spoke the heroic language, but he is not a great wanderer like Sigurd or the sagamen,

and his history is episodic. Under other circumstances he might have been immortalized by a ballad.

Amid all this which is old, there are suggestions in Saxo of a new spirit at work. He tells us that a Saxon singer, wishing to warn Knut Lavard that treachery was being prepared against him (Haraldstad, 1131), 'quod Canutum Saxonici et ritus et nominis amantissimum scisset', sang him the famous song of Grimhild's treachery towards her brothers. It is the matter of the *Nibelungenlied* in some older form, and also of the 'vise' *Grimhild's Vengeance* (DGF 5). Somewhat later, in 1157, a German singer composed a partisan poem against King Svend Grade, full of abuse. It is clearly different from the extant ballad of *Svend Grade* (DGF 118), which sang of the murder of Knut Magnussøn by King Svend. Scarcely two months later, at the battle of Gradehede, a singer rode between the lines to kindle the enthusiasm of Valdemar's troops by singing 'parricidalem Svenonis perfidiam famoso carmine'. The song can hardly have been other than the 'vise', recovered from a seventeenth-century manuscript. To achieve its effect the song must have been in Danish.

We are thus brought to the evidence of the historical ballads themselves. They form a well-nourished group among the 'viser', and thanks to their uniformity of style and sentiment they are the cement of the whole collection. The oldest belong to the era of nation-building under the two Valdemars (1157-82, 1202-41). There is a new doctrine of royalty implied by an ancient lyric embedded in one of the Diderik ballads:

The King he rules the city,  
he rules over all the land,  
and over so many bold heroes  
with naked sword in hand.  
*But the King he rules the city.*

Let the bonder rule his dwelling,  
let the courtier rule his horse;  
the King, the King of Denmark  
he rules both city and force!  
*But the King he rules the city.*

(DGF 8.)

Such a king is no longer a distributor of gold rings to a retinue of purely personal followers. The heroic hall has ceased to be the place of first importance; its place has been taken by the boroughs, backed by the farmers, whose defence is the duty of the military

and courtly class. This is the attitude of the poet who composed the ballads concerning Valdemar II's queens Bengerd (or Berengaria of Portugal) and Dagmar. Bengerd has been singled out for condemnation. As a morning-gift after her marriage to the king she demands the imposition of heavy taxes on the bonders (*DGF* 139); she is thus contrasted with her predecessor Dagmar, the merciful (*DGF* 133.) A beautiful ballad entitled *Queen Dagmar's Death* (*DGF* 135) increases the antithesis. Somewhat later, *Sir Tidemand's Murder* (*UDV* 60) is concerned with the opposition by the countrymen to the unpopular ploughpenny tax, probably in the reign of Erik Ploughpenny (1241-50). The frontier battle of Lena (1208), an attempt by the Danes from Skåne to recover control over Sweden, is the subject of a ballad which the competent authorities do not hesitate to class as contemporary (*DGF* 136). It is encountered in Sweden too (Arwidsson 153), as are also the earlier ballads of Esbern Snare, Sir Stig, Tovelille, and also *Queen Dagmar's Death*. The fact that so many historical ballads have migrated from Denmark to Sweden is one proof of the exceptional intimacy existing between those two lands. The oldest independent ballad in the Swedish series is *King Birger and his Brothers* (Bergström 94), which is also known in Denmark (*DGF* 154). This refers to a royal family tragedy of the years 1317-18. In Norway the oldest indigenous historical ballad seems to be *King Haagen Haagen's Death* (*DGF* 142), preserved in Danish, and it must have been soon followed by the Norse originals of the Faeroese *Frúgvín Margreta* and *Eyduns ríma* (Hammershaimb *FA* 19, 18, *DGF* iii, pp. 921-3). There is some record in the sixteenth century concerning this ballad in its Norse form (*Maritte på Nordnes*). The theme is the obscure fate of that Maid of Norway who brought to an end the old Scottish dynasty and gave cause for the fine ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*. According to the Scottish tradition she lies where

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,  
it's fiftie fadom deip.

The Norse singer, however, is a partisan of the woman who claimed to be the Maid, and was burned at Nordnes in 1301.

It is clear from these examples that the composition of 'viser' was active in Denmark from the earliest years of the thirteenth century. In Sweden the fashion was one of Danish origin, but was fully naturalized in the fourteenth century, and in Norway 'viser' seem

to have arisen midway between these two dates. To carry the Danish 'viser' back to the twelfth century is something not beyond a doubt. Those purporting to relate twelfth-century events are somewhat novelistic, and the facts cannot be ascertained without peradventure. Yet the ballads are relatively numerous. They begin before the accession of Valdemar I, with *Erik Emun and Sorte Plog* (*DGF* 116). Sorte Plog murders the king to avenge his brother; the details are not as in Saxo, and another authority supposes that Sorte Plog was avenging his father. The Sir Stig Hvide who perished at Viborg in 1151 (*DGF* 117) is probably the same person as the Sir Stig Hvide who enchanted with his runes Rigisse, a king's sister (*DGF* 76, Bergström 46). In so far as it concerns rune-casting the ballad belongs to the supernatural group; the description of Sir Stig's palace, which is all that the Swedes have remembered of this tradition, is a set-piece of baronial magnificence, like the description of Digenis Akritas's paradise on the Euphrates.

Then when they came to little Stig's port,  
there played a hind and danced a hart,  
*So joyfully.*

Then when they came Stig's gate within,  
there played a hart and danced a hind.

Then when they came within the hall,  
the gleam of gold was over all.

The roof it was with gold bedight,  
the floor was spread with brass so bright.

The oven was of marble-stone  
and all the walls of elfin-bone.

The board and stools of reddest gold,  
but the tablecloth of acre's wool.

*So joyfully.* (Bergström 46.)

In Saxo, as we have seen, there is almost a contemporary reference to the ballad of *Svend Grade* (*DGF* 118); a quotation would have clinched the proof. Valdemar I is remembered for his domestic misfortunes, which may be mostly imaginary. The role of a jealous wife is given to Queen Sophia, who is alleged to have burned the paramour Tove (*DGF* 121, 122, Bergström 43) in a bath house, to have embroiled Valdemar with his sister 'Little' Christine (*DGF* 126), and to have perished in a similar attempt to ruin her daughter (*DGF* 127). As to the truth of all this, one cannot say more than that Valdemar had an illegitimate son named Kristoffer,



for whom he felt great affection; and that doubtless the marriage with Sophia was an occasion for setting aside his mother, by name Tove or whatever it may have been. The opposition of gentleness to furious passion in the ballad is cause enough for the success of *Toveille* throughout all the North.

Thanks to a small, but very well defined, group of 'viser' (*DGF*, 145) the name of Marsk Stig has been added to those of Robin Hood, the Cid, and Marko Kraljević, among the heroes of the peoples. The cycle has served, along with that of Robin Hood, for one of the most important contributions to the theory of epos and ballad.<sup>1</sup> There is a long ballad of Marsk Stig, as there is one of Robin Hood, stitched together from shorter fragmentary ballads. The effect, however, is not at all epical in either case: they remain simply long ballads. Thus the whole process by which the Homeric and other epics were supposed to have been stitched together by rhapsodes, working with the materials of ballads, is evidently unfeasible. One does not produce epics in that manner, but only longer ballads. Marsk Stig is the champion of basic human rights. His exile is a protest against domestic tyranny, and his conduct a pattern of honourable independence. In 1286 King Erik Gipping was murdered at Finderup; in 1287 Marsk Stig was outlawed. The ballads suggest he was outlawed because of the king's unhallowed longing for his wife. Like a new Bathsheba, she was exposed to solicitation while her husband was at the wars. According to the long 'vise', which harmonized the episodes of the shorter ones, Stig had an evil dream, which was confirmed when Erik's messengers arrived to summon him to lead an expedition. Shortly afterwards the King arrived and attempted to corrupt Fru Ingeborg. She repelled his advances. Stig returned secretly, and hearing of this affair, swore not to rest till he had avenged his lady. He killed Erik at Finderup, and rode to court with this news, in order to reproach the queen with her lasciviousness. The new king, Kristoffer II, immediately banished the hero.

The defence of the frontiers gives rise to a few historical pieces of merit, beginning with *The Battle of Lena* in 1208. The finest of these is *Niels Ebbeson*, of 1340 (*DGF* 156). The grounds of his quarrel with the Holsteiners are, in the ballad manner, personal; but, though not explicitly recognized, there is an element of Danish patriotism in his deeds as in those of the epical Olger Danske.

<sup>1</sup> A. Heusler, *Lied und Epos*, Dortmund, 1905.

Frederick II's incursion into Dittmarschen concerns the same frontier, and there is a stirring ballad on the defeat of King Albert by Queen Margaret, when he attempted to seize the Danish throne (*DGF* 159). Like the coast of Germany, the Danish harbours were molested by sea-rovers in the later Middle Ages: the names of Alf of Tønsberg and Jon and Lave Rimaardsøn are preserved in ballads, to warn their imitators. For the rest, the histories preserve the memory of many private tragedies—murders, insults, and ravishments—the details of which are hard to verify. They are to be found equally in Sweden and Denmark. A notable subdivision contains the ballads which describe assaults on cloistered nuns. The most elaborate is that concerning Sir Karl (*UDV* 212, Bergström 24), in which the hero entered the cloister as a pretended corpse on a bier. The line of historical ballads continues in both countries, persisting longest in Sweden. As late as 1739 the Scottish captain Malcolm Sinclair became the subject of a ballad in the true traditional manner (Bergström 104).

In lands where the ballads are of relatively recent importation, the historical class tends to be wanting. That is true of Iceland and the Faeroes. In the Faeroes, however, the memory remains of the old Norse verses concerning the ill-fated Maid of Norway, and in quite recent times, thanks to the vigorous life of the genre, local happenings have been versified. In late 'viser' a mocking note can be heard which is not characteristic of the best age, and horror takes the place of tragedy.

Among the ballads of literary origin, those derived from the *Edda* and the *Thidrekssaga* are of the greatest importance. From the *Edda* come *Tord af Havsgaard*, *Ungen Svejdal* and, perhaps, *Sven Vonved*, *Sivard Snarensvend*, *Gramvold Kongeson*, and *Frændehevn* (these three belonging to the Nibelung legend), and the famous *Ribold and Guldborg* (*DGF* 82), which is probably to be associated with the second lay of *Helgi*. The connexion between lay and ballad is not often close, and in this last instance it is by no means obvious. Ribold dies because his snatched bride pronounces his name, thus breaking a tabu. The ballad is one of magic, and in that respect parallel to many others freely invented by the poets. It is one of the most eerie of its kind, and has taken so firm a hold on the imagination of the Scandinavian and Scottish people that it is still alive and still receives new settings. In the American mountains the ballad is called *The Seven Sleepers*, and

the events are supposed to have occurred within living memory. The excitement of bride-stealing and battle, which opens the piece, contrasts with the pathos of the last scenes, when the wounded lover, trying vainly to hide his sores, comes home to die. *Grimhild's Revenge* (DGF 5) derives, not from the *Edda*, but from the *Nibelungenlied*, but the Faeroese ballads of the cycle combine more than one source.<sup>1</sup> The Norse ballads (Landstad 9-11) are also characterized by their independence. The battle with the dragon in *Ragnar Lodbroks Saga* was a popular feature, re-created in the new manner by the authors of *Regnar and little Krage* and *The Dragon-fight* (DGF 22-4). It was also freely imitated in *Ribolt's fight with the Dragon and Aller* (DGF 27). The poetical fragments embedded in the *Hervararsaga* are evidence of the great age of this tradition. The sword Tyrfing—named after the ancient Tervingi—is invincible indeed, but brings death to him who holds it. It causes two brothers to fight together in Samsö, and a father to avenge the one who falls (*Alf i Odderskjær* or *Angelfyr and Helmer Kamp*, DGF 19). A fine symbolism sublimates the ballad of *The Avenger's Sword* (DGF 25). The sword is inspired with a rage for vengeance; having killed, it lusts to kill again.

Now lay thee still, thou shining brand,  
now lay thee still in Our Lord's name.

Then spake the sword in weary mood:  
'Now lust I for thine own heart's blood.

Hadst thou not named me by my name,  
right now should I have been thy bane.'

*Hagbard and Signe* (DGF 20) is a relic of the old Danish epos of that name. It is one of the finest of all ballads, and one frequently imitated. *Görel's Daughter and Count Henrik* and *Sir Carl and Lady Rigmor* and *Alvar Leðiesak* in Norway (Landstad 32) are related to it, and in Germany and Flanders the most characteristic episode is a ballad motif. There is tenderness in the tragedy, and the irresistible power of love; Hagbard and Signe are the Tristan and Isolde of the Scandinavian North.

A striking group of ballads derives from the *Thiðrikssaga*, translated from Low German at the beginning of the thirteenth century. There is the gathering of the German paladins in *They were seven and ten times seven*, the expedition against Brittany or Berting's Land, the fight between Svend Ungersvend and Berner the giant,

<sup>1</sup> H. de Boor, *Die färöischen Lieder des Nibelungenzyklus*, Heidelberg, 1918.

Diderik's adventure with the lion, and the feats of Samson (*DGF* 6-9, 11). Olger Danske appears as one of the German paladins, but he is also represented as a king of Jutland, and as such meets and routs Diderik's champion (*DGF* 17). He is, of course, the French Ogier, and his early prowess is the subject of the Carolingian ballad of *Olger and Burmand* (*DGF* 30). There is not otherwise much use made of the Carolingian traditions. In Norway there remain fragments of a ballad of *Roncesvalles*, and in the Faeroes there is a group carved out of the *Karlamagnussaga* in quite recent times. Olger fitted into the 'viser' because of the chance that he bore the title of 'Denmark' and because he is one of many giant-killers. His resistance to Diderik is on lines laid down by the *Thiðrekssaga*: Diderik boasts his unmatched might; he hears that there is a possible rival in Denmark; he advances to challenge him—

Stout Diderik sent word to Olger the Dane,  
and did this word indite:  
Or would he give him tribute-gold,  
or on the marches fight;—

but, contrary to precedent, Diderik was routed.

Minor sagas, like those of Hromund Gripsøn, Orm Stórálf's Sons, Illugi, Hermund illi, and Ásmund, were also used as sources for ballads, notably in the Faeroes. The age of such adaptations varies. As late as the first half of last century *St. Olaf's Saga* gave the Faeroese *Ormurin langi* (Hammershaimb *FA* 35) in the best traditional style. Among the Arthurian legends those of Tristan alone appealed to the Scandinavian taste. Tristan's death is sung in Iceland and the Faeroes (Grundtvig 23, Hammershaimb *FA* 27). There is evidence that this ballad was once known in Denmark.

The religious balladry of the north is also full of good things (*DGF* 96-113). The usual divisions occur: biblical extracts, saints' lives, moral tales. The Magdalene is, as elsewhere, confused with the Woman of Samaria. St. Olaf (*DGF* 50, 51) is the patron of the north, and his fights with trolls are just like those of other heroes, but more edifying. Innocence is triumphant, even on a blazing pyre (*DGF* 108, 109), and guilt is suitably punished. Many of these ballads are international: there are Danish representatives of the St. Catherine ballad, St. Stephen and Herod or the miracle of the capon, *Little Billee*, St. George, the *Sultan's daughter*, and the

journey to Eastland 'a lo divino'. *Hallewijn* has, of course, its representatives in Scandinavia and Scotland, and it was here that the lady-killer became conflated with the nixes which waylay damsels beside the torrents, so that the legend takes on a supernatural tinge. The sentiment of these old pieces is uniformly Catholic.

The religious poems (*Legendeviser*) and the heroic ballads (*kæmpeviser*) are either based on previous written or oral literature, or formed according to the same patterns. The adventure ballads of free invention are divided by experts into 'trylleviser' and 'riddervisier'; the former are magical, the latter normal. The distinction is an acknowledgement of the singularly important place held by the supernatural in the Nordic imagination. The ancient gods, it is true, had vanished before the ballads flourished; but the ancient fears had not abated. Nature still sent a shiver down men's spines. The sea swallowed ships in storms, and the rivers devoured maidens in spate. Every bridge was unstable, and beneath every bridge was a murderous nix. Mermen and mermaids, dwarfs and elves, trolls and dragons beset these men of the North, who were not such sound Christians as to defeat the enemy by making the sign of the cross. Runes were mightier than the Christian sign, and a powerful harpist might make the chthonian powers disgorge their prey. The 'trylleviser' are thus a distinguishing merit of Scandinavian balladry, which is shared with that of Scotland. The atmosphere of mystery and dread which fills so many great ballads is unknown to the brilliant South, and rare in Germany. The Russians and Bulgarians have much to sing about malicious supernatural beings, but they have not the same cowering dread. The Latvians and Lithuanians remember their old pantheon in detail, but Perkons and Laime are friendly little domestic creatures. It is not so in the Scandinavian lands. The twilight of Asgard seems to have left men without any friendly protectors to face the same terrible Nature, accompanied by fog, storm, ice, and rock.

The 'trylleviser' occupy the space from Nos. 33 to 95 in Grundtvig's collection (*DGF*) and are abundantly represented in all other compilations. *Germand Gladensvend* (*DGF* 33) is among the finest of these pieces, and might be a survival of some heroic poem. Devoted, at the moment of birth, to a monster of the sea, Germand was brought up by his mother till he was almost a man. He sought

a bride in England, but was caught and marked by the merman, who drank half his blood; on his return journey he vanished altogether. The fact that he makes his trips in a coat of feathers indicates that the whole legend is pre-Christian. Matthew Arnold has made English readers familiar with the ways of a merman and a maid. The group of 'viser' using this motif comprises one of the nix's wooing, and another of his married infelicity. He woos a maiden at the church door (*DGF* 39), taking the form of a knight; he reveals himself only as he drowns her in the waves. The nix's wife begs to revisit her home (*DGF* 38); she forgets her husband there, until he drops an apple in her lap. These ballads occur in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Faeroes, and Iceland. In Sweden the merman has become a hill-sprite (*Bergström* 1), but the story is the same. Both legends are firmly located in Low Germany, and in one case identified with the Jade Estuary (*Erk-Böhme* 1). Haupt and Schmalzer (i, 34 *Wodny muž*) reproduce the second ballad as it is known among the Lusatian Wends. In France the first one is probably the source of *La belle Hélène*, who is drowned while dancing over a bridge; but a moral twist has been given to the story. Olrik and Grundtvig held that the Danish ballad was translated from the German in the latest years of the Middle Ages, but Erk and Böhme thought it might be Slavonic. There does not seem any convincing reason for removing from the North Sea coast a pair of ballads so obviously at home there. *Rosmer* (*DGF* 41), the ballad cited by Shakespeare as *Child Roland to the dark Tower came*, is one of romantic adventure, with a tinge of the supernatural. He wins his bride back from a Greenland ogre by a trick. In the Faeroes the hero is called Rolf the Ganger. Mermaids are less noticeable than mermen. A certain Sir Peder or Hillebrand (*Bergström* 77) or Villfar (*Landstad* 55) recovered his sister from the power of one of them.

Elves, trolls, hill-sprites, and dwarfs give cause for many 'viser' in all the Scandinavian countries. Goethe's *Erkönig* is based, in the words of one commentator, 'on a rude Danish ballad in which a young nobleman falls in with the elves and thereby receives his doom to death'. 'Goethe's treatment (he goes on to say) is far more imaginative and subjective than that of the original.' Yet one may go back from *Erkönig* to *Elveskud* (*Elf-shot*, *DGF* 47) with a sharpened appetite. Not only is the narrative used by Goethe somewhat different, but his use of atmosphere and dramatic sug-

gestion are palpably literary devices which contrast with the unemphatic directness of the original. The original's merits depend not on a form of words—essential in the case of *Erlikönig*—since the words change with each version; the appeal is made by the inherent mysterious dread of the events staring starkly through the impersonal expression. The ballad is at home in Denmark. It has travelled over all the North: the exact affiliation of the Faeroese ballad is shown by the name given to the hero *Ólavur Riddararós* ('knightly-rose'), which derives from the Icelandic *Liljurós* ('lily-rose'), as that from the Norse *Liljukrans* ('lily-wreath'). In England and Scotland it is *Clerk Colvill*, in Lusatia and Czechoslovakia *The luckless Marriage* (Haupt and Schmalzer i, 3, Sušil 89), in Brittany *Count Nann* (Luzel i, p. 5), in France *Le roi Renaud* (Doncieux 7), in Italy *Sore-wounded* or *Count Anzolin* (Nigra 21, 22), in Catalonia *Count Ramón* (Milá 204, 210), and in Spain and Portugal *Don Pedro* (Menéndez y Pelayo, *Antología* x, p. 110, Braga, *Romanceiro* i, p. 627). In Germany, apart from the modern translations by Herder (accepted in the *Wunderhorn* as an original German folk-song) and Grimm, the motif was used for the adventure story of the *Ritter von Stauffenberg*. It is the most travelled of all the 'viser'. In the lands to the south, where elfin superstitions were not rife, the interest is excited by the concluding tableau: the young knight, mortally wounded, who conceals his death from his newly wed or pregnant bride. The human tragedy of this poem is as keen as its ghostly dread.

*Elf-hillock (Elvehøj)* has travelled less, but is scarcely inferior (DGF 46), followed by *Sir Bosmer, Malfred, Duke Magnus*, &c. The Icelanders have created an unusual monster, the 'stafró' (Grundtvig 9), which appears to be a combination of elf-queen and hind; she bewitches Kári so that he forgets his runes.

Then there are the revenants. Two of these are of exceptional interest: the Lenore-motif in *Aage and Else* (DGF 90) and the step-mother-motif in *Moderen under Mulde* (DGF 89). In the waking of Angantyr and of Groa, Old Norse poems embodied the belief that strong spells could rouse the dead to aid the living; and the strongest of such spells, in ballad poetry, is love: the love of a mother for a child or of a lover for the beloved. The bitter weeping of Else wakens Aage from his rest, so that he comes and rides with her to a common tomb; the bitter weeping of an injured child wakens her mother to rise and reprove the cruel stepmother. Both

ballads have spread very widely. The motifs might be deemed universal, were it not that in Germany and the south credulity does not go so far as to suppose the dead able to rise. The stepmother ballad thus reduces itself to a lyric: the useless tears of orphans. In our own *Sweet William's Ghost* (Child 77) we feel the full force of the Northern superstition of *Aage and Else*, which has spread through Germany to Czechoslovakia also. The stepmother ballad is to be encountered in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, the Faeroes, Iceland, Germany (Erk-Böhme 190), Lusatia (Haupt and Schmalzer i, 132, ii, 102), Czechoslovakia (Sušil 159), Hungary (Wlislöck 3), Lithuania (Rhesa 24), Latvia (Endzelin, *Lett. Lesebuch* 33), Esthonia (Hurt i, 68), and also Poland and the Ukraine. *Sir Morten of Fogelsang* (DGF 92) is also an impressive figure, compelled, like King Hamlet, to revisit the glimpses of the moon.

Lastly, there are various kinds of magic: tabu, witchcraft, runes, the power of music. The breaking of a tabu on a name is the main feature of *Ribold and Guldborg* (DGF 82) and of *Blak og Ravn hin brune* (DGF 62). The malicious powers of witches, who were often also stepmothers, sufficed to change boys and girls into ravens, nightingales, hinds, werewolves, snakes, and trees. Some of these have travelled: *Jomfru i Hindeham* (DGF 58) becomes the French *La Biche blanche* (Doncieux 16). They may not all be indigenous to Scandinavia, since superstitions of this kind are universal; but what is characteristic is the presence of so many examples of real power in a single ballad corpus. The use of runes, both for bewitchment and to compel love, is certainly a Scandinavian motif (DGF 73-81). Three ballads show the power of music. *Sir Verner* (DGF 383) escapes from prison, thanks to his singing; the same motif is familiar in France. *The Harp's Power* (DGF 40) tells how Sir Villemand recovered his drowned bride from the power of a troll at Blide-bro.

Sir Villemand took his harp in hand,  
he went before the stream to stand.

He played his harp so soft and low,  
there moved no fowl upon the bough.

He struck his harp so sore and hard,  
the sound was heard in all the garths.

The bark it sprang from the oak tree,  
the horn sprang from the well-fed kye.



The bark it sprang off from the birch,  
 and all the studs from Mary's church.  
 He struck his harp to hurt and harm,  
 —*The strings are of gold*—  
 and struck his bride from the foul troll's arm.  
*So fairly he played for his lady.*

The power of music to disturb and disrupt appears also in the Russian ballad of *Sudko* and some Greek songs. In another song the action is performed by a harp, so that the harp is often named in the title. We know it rather as *The Two Sisters* (Child 10), and that title is also used by some Scandinavian collectors. *The speaking Harp* or *Chords* (DGF 95) tells how one sister murdered another and made her relics into a harp; the chords of the harp revealed the crime.

The 'ridderviser', or adventures without the supernatural, are, as elsewhere, chiefly histories of lovers: how they woo and are constant or unfaithful, how they test each other's affection, how they survive or succumb to opposition, and suffer from the force or wiles of rivals, how they elope, how brides are stolen or ravished, and brothers and sisters may unwittingly commit incest, how love leads on to death and murder, and how vengeance is exacted. Some ballads adopt a scoffing tone before love; others are concerned with romantic material in which love plays only a small part. Some of these adventure ballads extend to a considerable length, as *Axel and Valborg*, *Knut i Borg*, *Malfred and Mogens*, *Edmund and Benedik*. They are short and simple epyllia, and their number was increased, towards the sixteenth century, by similar long ballads imported from Germany, such as *Tannhäuser* and the *Count of Rome*. The great majority of ballads, however, are of a more episodic cast, and consequently much briefer. Sometimes it is evident, as in the case of *Lady Ingefred Torluf's Daughter* (UDV 118), that the ballad (a variant of *Marianson*) is of foreign origin; others have an air of being records of fact; but in general the question of originality hardly arises, since little more is attempted than the rearrangement of a few simple common motifs.

There is charm in *Proud Ingeborg's Disguise* and *The little Foot-page* (UDV 185, 186), since one of the lovers is no more than a stable-boy, though later revealed to be of higher degree. In many cases the course of true love is interrupted by long absences, resembling those of the *Moringe* cycle. Of such are *Thor and*

*Thure* (UDV 54, 55, DGF 72), *Lovmand and Thor* (UDV 199), and others. Opposition to lovers is more than once offered in the form chosen by David, the king sending the unwanted suitor to the front of the battle. In the fine Norse tale of *Axel and Valborg* (UDV 143) the difficulty arises from the fact that the lovers are related in the third degree. The king's son Haagen contrives to have their pact annulled, with an impressive ritual which is adequately described, and to marry Valborg himself. In a war with Sweden which follows, Haagen is killed. Axel avenges him; Axel dies victorious, and Valborg enters a convent. There is less merit in *Torkild Trundeson* (UDV 200) and in *Malfred and Mogens* (UDV 217, DGF 49), which also seems to have been of Norse origin. The rivalry of concubine and wife gives rise to the powerful *Sir Peter and his Concubine* (DGF 210, UDV 158), and to other ballads of the same sort. In *Fair Anna* (UDV 177), the rivals are sisters and recognize each other on the bridal night. One of the most popular ballads in the north is *Sir Lave and Sir Jon*, distinguished for its mocking tone. Sir Jon is the Lochinvar of the north.

Trickery and force are used against rivals in a number of 'viser', of which perhaps the best is *Ebbe Skammelson* (DGF 354, UDV 120). While Ebbe was at court his brother spread a false report of his death, and so contrived to wed his fiancée; returning, and being unable to persuade the bride to run away with him, he kills her and his brother, and wounds both his parents. The ballad is marked by a sense of actuality.

There are many elopements. It is evident that the custom of bride-stealing was not far from the experience of those who composed ballads, and that a stolen wedding was the most interesting. Such exploits led to fights with the young lady's brothers and with her father; and to these encounters a number of different solutions are given. In *Ribold and Guldberg*, so often cited, and *Hilde's Sorrow* (DGF 83), the bride makes an appeal for one last surviving relative, naming her lover, who at once receives his deadly wound. In others (*The Lady in the Wood*, *Sir Helmer Blaa*, &c.) the battle ends in a reconciliation, or all agreement is refused and the fight ends in death. The most dramatic of these pieces is *Nilus and little Hilde* (DGF 325, UDV 121). Caught by a storm while eloping, Nilus is forced to seek shelter with his lady's brother—a bitter enemy. The brother welcomes his sister, but not her lover, who has to fight to the death:

Up then stood Sir Nilus,  
and his bright sword he drew,  
and as I tell you verily  
right manfully did hew.

*They played a play, and the play was all of anger.*

Now there was Sir Nilus,  
and hewed he all so fast,  
so long until his goodly sword  
in the hilt asunder burst.

He parried with the cushions  
and with the bolster blue,  
and out before the bedroom door  
received his deadly wound.

Then spake the bold Sir Nilus,  
in pain and hurt he cried:  
'Now come you forth, proud Hilde,  
for now 'tis time to ride!'

Now there was Sir Nilus,  
he sat him on his horse;  
so rode he on to Hedingsholm,  
for better or for worse.

*They played a play, and the play was all of anger.*

There are many tragedies of vengeance in the 'viser', some of them commonplace and prosy (like *Edmund and Benedikt*), but others intense. A fierce motif descending from pagan days is the need to destroy even children, lest there be a subsequent reprisal. This is the moral of *Ung Villum* and *Liden Engel* (UDV 126, 127), in which a babe is hidden by its mother so as to grow up as an avenger. The avenging sword, in the ballad cited in a former paragraph, slays the babe in the cradle before thirsting after the blood of its owner. *Daughters avenge their Father* (UDV 171, DGF 193) has the peculiarity of showing that the passion for vengeance could be felt by women as well. There are many ballads, also, of wild crimes, possibly records of particularly revolting occurrences, though they are now hard to identify: *Sir Palle*, *Olaf Strangeson*, *Sir Jonas*, &c. In *Sir Truel's Daughters* (UDV 164), which is known also in Sweden, Iceland, and the Faeroes, we have essentially the same theme as the Russian *Nine Brothers and their Sister*: the outlaw brother or brothers attack a girl or girls, who prove to be their own flesh and blood. So the religious awe attaching to incest is added to the horror of violence. In other ballads incest is used to

whet the emotions, as in *Sir Sallemand*, *Sir Sverkel*, *The Foundling*, and the Icelandic *Tale of Margreta*.

Taken as a whole there is a sombre tone in the themes and the verse of the North. Despite some mocking ballads (*skæmteviser*), one does not encounter the light touch of French folk-song. It is not a convention that love and marriage should be targets for wit, despite the *Tricked Suitor* (*UDV* 122, *DGF* 229). The tone of the whole Northern balladry is earnest, and its language and concepts intense. The form tends to diffuseness and lyricism; it is remarkable how the poets contrive to pour into their essentially lyrical mould a content which is strictly narrative, and even dramatic. The unity of style prevailing throughout the whole corpus is one of its most remarkable features. The 'viser' must have been an absorbing passion. The graver emotions are exploited with ingenious mastery: love strong as death, jealousy, revenge, treachery, and the formless, viewless horror of an evil world ever beside man's elbow.

For the sake of convenience this account of Scandinavian balladry has been based on Danish collections, not merely because they are on the whole older and better than the others, but also because *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* is, in some sort, a summation of all other evidence on the subject. The survival in Danish of a given ballad, however, is not necessarily proof of its Danish origin. On the contrary, we have seen evidence of Norwegian creative activity, which has enriched the common fund. The regional differences of the 'viser', though interesting for the specialist, are rarely such as to demand notice in a general statement like the present. The Swedish songs resemble, when viewed as a corpus, those of Denmark most intimately. Arwidsson and Bergström are complementary collectors, so that, for instance, we find in Arwidsson precisely those epical ballads which we miss in Bergström. Danish is spoken in one of the Swedish provinces—in Skåne—and the two languages are so intimately allied that transference is almost immediate from the one to the other. On the other hand, there are signs of specially close relations between Norway, Iceland, and the Faeroes. The Norse ballads recorded by Landstad show considerable originality. The activity of trolls and monsters is more constant and more formidable, and there is a greater use made of minor and late sagas as the source of ballad stories. A very curious piece in Landstad's collection is *Draumekvæði* (7). Olaf Ástason or

Orknison dreams of Hell and Paradise. He mentions Christ and St. Michael, but he also mentions the Gjallarbrúi—the bridge spanning the abyss in old Norse mythology. The basis of the dream is, in fact, heathen superstition; and for a considerable part of its length the poem runs parallel to the minor Eddic poem *Sólarljóð*. It is supposed that Ástason may be a corruption of Aasgardson, and so connected with Ansgarius, the apostle of Norway, who died on 3 February 865.

The Faeroese ballads have the interesting feature of being still in active life. They came late to the islands, but have proved wholly congenial. Those of Iceland, though earlier, have not flourished. They came into conflict with the local 'rímur', and were worsted in the contest.<sup>1</sup> The 'rímur' appealed to the same public by means of similar themes. The Icelanders have perforce relied on their own resources for entertainment, both because of their distance from European foci of literary fashion, and because the hard conditions of life keep the social units small. The 'rímur' have circulated by means of recitations in such circles continuously since the fourteenth century. They are, like the 'viser', distinctively medieval. They are narratives. There is no pretence of originality of invention. Sir William Craigie has reproduced the Danish prose text of the Gowrie Conspiracy, from which Einar Guðmundsson carved his *Skotlands Rímur* somewhat later than 1620. There is no refrain in these pieces, and full rhyme is used as against assonance. At first sight the verse is simple: quatrains, tercets, &c., used without variation throughout the piece. They were undoubtedly popular. In all this the 'rímur' resemble ballads, but in other ways they are very different. They are subject to very complex conventions of alliteration and rhyme, and they are grouped together under rules which forbid the repetition of the same devices. Alliteration is present in the 'viser', where it often gives pleasure, and it is a prosodic principle of the songs of Finland and Esthonia; but it is nowhere used with the precision demanded by the Icelandic 'rímur'. The poet is generally known; there is no traditional anonymity in his art. His object is not to contribute to a common fund, but to display his art before connoisseurs. Relatively uninterested in the matter of the song, the Icelandic people were, and are, acute critics of the form. In the long winter nights there is

<sup>1</sup> See Sir William Craigie, *The Art of Poetry in Iceland*, Oxford, 1937, and *Skotlands Rímur*, Oxford, 1908.

time to discuss art in the minutest detail: in fact, prosodic study took the place of the general conversation which often follows a recitation in the American mountains, though the latter turns on the subject-matter of the ballad. Only by research could the elaborate, but quite conventional, kennings be understood, and to serve this research the records of older literature were carefully preserved. Scholarship is greatly indebted to the 'rímur' for their by-products. If it is scarcely possible for a European taste to esteem these poems for their own merits, though we may coldly admire their intricacy, the 'rímur' serve to remind us that there is no inevitability about the 'popular' in poetry. A 'people' can be a people of connoisseurs. Indeed, an aesthetically enlightened people would display connoisseurship in some respect of the ballad art. The case of Iceland goes further, however, since it shows an undoubted 'people' interested in the niceties and subtleties of an advanced art, to the exclusion of those ready appeals to the understanding and senses which are normally supposed to be 'popular'.

### 3. *England, Scotland, America*

F. J. Child's *English and Scottish Ballads* is designed to make easy the comparison of the British and Scandinavian material. The annotations draw deeply on those of the great Svend Grundtvig, whose criteria of admittance rule throughout the collection, and who was actually consulted in forming the canon. The collection contains, inevitably, much material which is doubtfully traditional. Some English medieval pieces, retained in deference to the Percy manuscript, seem hard to justify on any other ground. On the other hand, the criterion of anonymity favours the balladry of Scotland at the expense of its southern neighbour. Scottish Border balladry rises to its zenith in the sixteenth century. English balladry was not one whit less active in that century, but it had taken a new direction. The invention and application of printing was causing ballad-mongers to print their wares on broadsides; the censorship forced them to register their pieces and names at Stationers' Hall. Thus we hear of William Marten, Richard Beard, William Forrest, Henry Spooner, John Bradford, William Elderton, and the rest of the motley company, whose wares have been gathered into the Pepys, Wood, Shirburn, Bagford, and other collections. Under other criteria some of this material might have been included in the standard collection of our ballads. They were

undoubtedly popular. Shakespeare hummed them, and expected his audiences to pick up an allusion or parody in the space of a line or two. Under other criteria a number of English carols might have been included. The student of comparative balladry is, in fact, somewhat under the thumb of the collectors, who have not all worked with the same intentions. That which, in Child's work, helps us to make Scandinavian comparisons, hinders comparison with Erk and Böhme and Liliencron. At the same time it has to be admitted that a printed text does not permit the full range of traditional variations, and that the Tudor and Jacobean ballad-mongers functioned rather as journalists than as entertainers. They sought an immediate response of a pious or political sort, and they were less scrupulous as to the means employed. There is already apparent in them a decline in popular taste. The intuitive delicacy of traditional verse is unknown to them, and by their prints they contrived that it should be forgotten by the public also. It survived in Scotland; and in Aberdeenshire, where society is still notably self-centred and self-sufficing, the older traditional ballad persisted to our own day. It was these that Child desired to include, and his collection has a remarkable predominance of Scottish pieces.<sup>1</sup>

The Scottish and English elements of Child's book cannot be separated entirely. *Sir Aldingar* (59) is undoubtedly English, but two of the significant versions are Scottish. *Thomas Rymer* (37) is Scottish, but has the support of English manuscripts, and it is clear that Thomas of Erceldoune's reputation stood equally high on both sides of the Border. *The Battle of Otterburn* and *The Hunting of the Cheviot* (161, 162) are both English and Scottish, though the sentiments are mostly English. The approximation of the two countries is the more marked because the best ballads come from that 'other English nation', northern England. Northumberland and Cumberland, Newcastle and Carlisle, are foci of Border balladry, and those of outlaws—*Adam Bell*, the Robin Hood cycle (115-54)—are located north of Trent. One may credit southern counties with distinctively literary ballads, in all probability, but with not many others. Their exiguous share in this work is partly due to the drying up of balladry in and near London thanks to the diffusion of broadside ballads in the early sixteenth century. The pressure of the new style was particularly severe in the south. The

<sup>1</sup> See Note H, p. 388.

south, however, was subject to considerable pressure from written literature during the whole Middle Ages, from which the north, sheltered by its dialect, was relatively free. It is really remarkable how slight a trace has been left on traditional balladry by the wars in France—the great historical theme of the southern counties. Yet there is no want of political poets of the calibre of Minot or Drayton, masters of a semi-popular style. One is justified in considering the dearth of southern ballads to be original, so that the ballad England is north England as the ballad Scotland is the Scotland where ‘Inglis’ was spoken. It was from Bristol, Plymouth, and southern ports that settlers went to New England and Virginia, taking with them authentic traditional tunes and ballads. Though apparently not indigenous, ballads did not fail to find acceptance in the south.

The national elements of the *English and Scottish Ballads*, then, cannot be separated; but they can be broadly distinguished. English ballads are typically (1) the Robin Hood pieces from middle England, (2) the historical narratives of the type of *Chevy Chase* and *Durham Field*, and (3) picaresque and romantic pieces. The Scottish ballads are, distinctively, (1) supernatural narratives, (2) tragic love ballads, (3) Border ballads, and the later ballads of feuds in Aberdeenshire and round about.<sup>1</sup> The English ballads are recitatives; the Scottish ballads have a single or double refrain in many cases, and are closely associated with Scandinavian ‘viser’ designed to be danced. Whether the Scottish pieces were themselves danced there seems not sufficient evidence to determine. The Scottish ballads are linked to Scandinavia, and the ports of Aberdeenshire and Fife must have been marts of the traffic; the English ballads typically show reliance on France, when they have international material. That is true of the romantic ones, and of the Christian ballads, *The Maid and the Palmer*, *St. Stephen and Herod*, and *Judas* (21–3). They also offer means of comparison with Germany and the lands dependent on German initiative, at points where these touch the French tradition.

The age of British balladry is hard to determine. Collection began, in the Percy Folio, at too late an epoch. By the reign of Charles I we may feel sure that the Tudor broadside poets had wrought considerable damage; it is evident in the damaged condi-

<sup>1</sup> The distinction is made by W. Schmidt in the *Neuphilologische Monatschrift*, viii, 1937, p. 86.



tion of the old ballads taken to America at that time or a little later. There must have been heavy losses of medieval material. As no distinction was made between new and old, doubtless there are apparently old ballads (such as some of the Robin Hood cycle) which are really quite modern inventions. Discriminating collectors were unknown until we pass the date of Percy's *Reliques*, and even then they were unsystematic. The evidence offered by Child's collection is more debatable than that of *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, and it is more hazardous to come to any negative conclusion.

The entire group of Scottish Border ballads, from *Johnnie Armstrong* (169) to *Parcy Reed* (193), belongs to the sixteenth century, together with *Mary Hamilton*, *Edom o' Gordon*, *The Bonny Earl o' Murray*, *The Laird o' Logie*, *Willie Macintosh*, and perhaps *Outlaw Murray* (173, 178, 181-3, 305). They are followed by thirteen ballads on Scottish battles and tragedies of the seventeenth century (194-206), and three from the eighteenth (208-10). There are other Scottish ballads, of a more domestic nature, which can be referred to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Against these we can set only a handful of early pieces: *Sir Patrick Spens* (58), *Gude Wallace* (157, based on *Blind Harry*, c. 1460), the Scottish Otterburn ballads (of uncertain date), and *Harlaw* (163). Only *Harlaw* gives a reasonably secure date. The event occurred in 1411, and it was of immediate local interest to Aberdonians. The ballad is of the sort which arises directly out of the experience it narrates, and we are, in any case, certain that it existed in 1549. *Sir Patrick Spens* is, in its style, the finest of the Scottish ballads. The words work on the imagination right from the conventional, yet ominous, opening:

The king sits in Dumferling toune,  
drinking the blude-reid wine.

He chooses a captain for his ship, and sends him his written commands:

The first line that Sir Patrick red,  
a loud lauch lauched he;  
The next line that Sir Patrick red,  
the teir blinded his ee.

‘O wha is this has don this deid,  
this ill deid don to me,  
to send me out this time o’ the yeir,  
to sail upon the se?’

The ship is, as he dreaded, totally wrecked:

O our Scots nobles were richt laith  
to weet their cork-heild schoone;  
bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,  
their hats they swam aboone.

In the ballad, however, there is nothing to say when this disaster occurred. Some versions give Norway as the destination, and it is a conjecture that the ballad speaks of the loss of the Maid of Norway in 1290; and it is only conjecturally that we can assign this ballad to the early years of the fourteenth century. The Scottish evidence thus indicates that there were only a few ballads before the sixteenth century; the apogee of this genre in Scotland is to be placed in that era. A late date for Scottish balladry is also compatible with the circumstance that the adventure ballads held in common with Denmark and Norway are more satisfactory in their Scandinavian forms, and consequently almost all must be reckoned imports into Scotland.

The English evidence allows for a higher antiquity, but is more difficult to follow because of possible literary interference. Child has a sturdy group of sixteenth-century ballads extending from *Andrew Barton* to *King James and Brown* (167-80, from A.D. 1511-78), and he reproduces four sea-songs from that era and the next (285-8). This is the principal group of historical ballads, and it would have been vastly increased had his editorial conscience allowed him to include the Tudor political pieces by named authors. The sixteenth century was the apogee of the historical ballad in England as in Scotland. But there are also a considerable number of English ballads of much earlier date. Excluding, for the moment, *Sir Aldingar* (59), which refers to persons of the tenth century, we find that Robin Hood was probably a real personage of the twelfth century (dying in 1198), and that four ballads were stitched into the *Geste* (117) before 1400. The circulation of Robin Hood pieces is attested in 1377; nothing prevents the supposition that they were composed much earlier. *Queen Eleanor's Confession* (156) and *Sir Hugh* (155) are not ballads to corroborate the evidence of early date, though they refer to personages of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries respectively, since the former may be of literary origin, and the latter is a religious legend. In the fourteenth century we encounter *Sir Hugh Spencer* (158), *Durham Field* (159), *Otterburn* (161), and in the fifteenth century we find

*Robyn and Gandeley* (115, manuscript of 1450), *Agincourt* (164), *Sir John Butler* (165), *The Rose of England* (166, an allegory). Most of these pieces are classified among the 'ballads of minstrelsy', that is to say, they are such as to lie open to the caprices of self-conscious art. Their testimony is not conclusive, but, taken cumulatively, it seems to establish the existence of English ballads in the fourteenth century, while leaving open the question of an earlier date. The Otterburn ballads, referring to an event of the year 1388, were probably extant shortly after 1400. Sir Philip Sidney is a witness for *Chevy Chase* in 1559. Child took his version of *Judas* (23) from a thirteenth-century manuscript; his *St. Stephen and Herod* (22) is from a fifteenth-century manuscript.

*Sir Aldingar* (59) is the most important of our ballads, and is in other ways one of the most interesting. The name given by Child is that of the villain, Aldingar or Roddingham. Others have been attracted by the name of the hero, Mimecan, which appears in the Danish *Ravengaard og Memering* (DGF 13); in some English versions this name is conventionalized as 'Sir Hugh le Blond'. The story is a sort of inversion of the legend of Joseph and Zuleikha; in this case the man is the tempter, and he falsely accuses the innocent wife. She is condemned to the flames by a credulous husband, but surprisingly delivered by a champion whom no one could expect. The reason for this unexpectedness, in our ballad, is that the accuser is a giant, the champion Mimecan a dwarf. In other versions, while there is some similar disparity of natural force, the champion is made to come from a long distance, viz. from the poet's own country. The plot is probably not private to the ballad. Paulus Diaconus tells the same story in a few words concerning the Lombard queen Gundiberga in the seventh century,<sup>1</sup> and, in view of the remarkable popularity of the *Lombard History*, there seems no reason for refusing to consider that this text is the original germ of the ballad. William of Malmesbury (c. 1150) related the plot of the ballad, insisting on the smallness of the champion (*puerulum*) and the great bulk of the accuser (*delatori giganteæ moliminis homini*), and he adds the significant remark that this was a subject

<sup>1</sup> Gundiberga . . . quum de crimine adulterii apud virum accusata fuisset, proprius eius servus, Carellus nomine, a rege expetiit, ut cum eo, qui reginæ crimen ingesserat, pro castitate suæ dominæ monomachia dimicaret. Qui dum criminatore illo singulare certamen inisset, cum cuncto populo astante, superavit. Regina vero post hoc factum ad dignitatem pristinam rediit (*De gestis Langobardorum*, iv, cap. 49).

for public recitations (et nostro adhuc sæculo etiam in triviis cantitata). The language of this song was doubtless not that of the sixteenth-century ballads we now read; the plot may have been more fully expounded, but it cannot have extended to more than the single significant episode. The poem was of unknown age even in the middle years of the twelfth century (adhuc etiam). Mimicon and Roddyngar are named by John Bromton in the fourteenth century, and Mimecan by Matthew of Westminster. From the time of our first quotation there are fixed points in all versions of the legend: the victim is an empress of Germany, married to a Henry; she is condemned to be burned if no champion will appear; no champion dares to fight the accuser save one who is a dwarf or comes from a distance; the champion belongs to the poet's own land. The Danish ballad is identical with the English one in all essentials; Gunhild's name persists in the Icelandic, Faeroese, and some Danish versions.

Professor R. W. Chambers has indicated, in a lecture delivered in Manchester, that the function of this legend was consolation. The ruined Anglo-Saxons comforted themselves with a tale of their lost dynasty, in which a Saxon hero vanquished an oppressor seemingly as all-powerful as the Norman lords. If this be so, the ballad is all the more pertinent to the Norman dynasty. Its later development is not entirely confined to balladry, since it passed into romance, with the *Earl of Toulouse*; to the historical novel in Ginés Pérez de Hita's *Guerras de Granada*; to the moral apologue in Don Juan Manuel's *Conde Lucanor*; to the opera in Wagner's *Lohengrin*. When Ariosto talks of the 'aspre legge di Scozia' as condemning peccant wives to the flames, he bears witness that the old English motif has become anybody's plaything. It is not, as we have seen, original to the English poet; but it was he who gave the story a definitive form, and sent it rolling among his connexions over all Europe. He also created, as it seems, the oldest English ballad.

The cycle of Robin Hood and his merry men is historical in so far as he was or was believed to be a real person. Some of them, particularly the older ones, are expressions of a doubtless historical emotion, the feud of Saxon and Norman. Those who oppress are Normans: the sheriff of Nottingham and the richer clergy. The oppressed are Saxons or associated, through their poverty, with the Saxon lower classes. They find a typical representative in Sir

Richard of the Lee. The king, however, is regarded as no foreigner, and the struggle is more of classes than of races. For the rest, the ballads of this cycle have little foundation in fact. As with the Cid and Marko Kraljević, the ballad-poets have created a type of hero and of adventures, and the latter can be readily multiplied according to pattern. The hero is distinguished by his sense of fair play. He seeks a rough justice for all, including himself, and he takes the readiest means to that end. His sense of humour is lively, if not subtle. Robin Hood can take a beating without malice, and he does not lose his power to impose respect. Apart from the particular history of his feud with the sheriff and abbot concerning Sir Richard's property, the episodes tend to repeat the tableau of good-humoured cudgellings, and it is with one of the series that the cycle is closed.

A notable feature of the English and Scottish ballads is the complete absence of contact with the ancient Germanic epos. The only complete example of that epos is the Saxon *Beowulf*, and *Finnsburg* and *Waldere* are important fragments; *Widsith* is the completest inventory. The existence of such documents must be due, in part, to contact with the literate Romance area; but for the same reason the traditional epics were the sooner eclipsed. In exchange for these, English balladry includes some interesting Arthurian pieces: *The Boy and the Mantle*, *King Arthur and King Cornwall*, *The Marriage of Sir Gawain* (29-31). *King Henry* (32), a Scottish ballad, is notable for its connexion with Celtic poetry on the one side and Scandinavian on the other. It is a tale of the disenchantment of a hag into a beautiful princess. That is the motif of *The Marriage of Sir Gawain*, at the close, but also of the West Highland tale of *The Daughter of King Under-waves*, and of the saga of *Hrolf Kraki*. Disenchantment by a kiss is used in *Kemp Owyne* (34), which is associated with the saga of *Hjálmtér ok Ólver* and more remotely with *Libeaus desconeüs*. In Denmark it is *The Maid in Dragon-form* (DGF 59).

Other ballads of a semi-literary type are *Hind Horn* (17), and *The Kitchie Boy* (252), modelled upon it. This is yet another variation on the theme of the wanderer's homecoming, of which the *Noble Moringer* is the outstanding example. More literate forms are the poetical romances of *Horn et Rymenhild* and *Horn Child and Maiden Rimmild*. *King John and the Bishop* (45) is one of Bürger's sources. *King Estmere*, *Sir Cawline*, and *Sir Lionel* (60, 61, 18) are

all English and 'ballads of minstrelsy'; while *Blancheflour and Jellyflorice* (300), though Scottish, is a popularization of the well-known French sentimental romance. An interesting piece of Classical origin is *King Orfeo* (19). It is an example of the Classical themes which can become completely popular. The persistence in it of refrains in the Norrone dialect of Shetland is unique.

Child included few religious pieces, but they are good. The Samaritan woman, Judas, Dives, the miracle of the capon, and the miracle of the cherry-tree (21-3, 54, 56) are English and Scottish representatives of wide ballad families. In *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight* (4), a Scottish ballad, we possess a fine representative of the *Hallewijn* family, in which not the slightest reminiscence remains of the original Holofernes. The ballad is at home in Holland and Flanders, but it has not come from there to Britain. On the contrary, it has come from Norway or Denmark, along with other imported pieces, and has acquired its elfin character on that journey.

The use of literary formulas, so frequent in France and Germany, is rare in Scottish balladry. But *The Grey Cock* (248) is an example of the 'aubade'.

There are no mythological ballads in the English and Scottish corpus. The lapse of time between the fall of the gods and the rise of balladry was too great to be bridged. Good use is made, however, of the lesser paganism of elves, revenants, and changelings; less abundantly, perhaps, than in Scandinavia, but with effectiveness. The greater number of such ballads, though not all, are Scottish. The elfin ballads are *Thomas Rymer*, *The wee, wee Man*, *Hind Etin*, and *Clerk Colvill* (37, 38, 41, 42). The last-named is the Danish *Elveskud*, recommended not only by its words but also by the air.<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Rymer* is based on the Scottish verse romance of Thomas of Erceldoune, written before the middle of the fifteenth century. The personage is historical, since Thomas seems to have

<sup>1</sup> *Clerk Colvill* (first line)

(i) 525BE2

34 U8  
dgg.g./a.ad../cga.  
and

(ii)

(d..g)/g...g./a...a./d...cg/a...

*Elveskud*

(i) 5A1221AD2B

1 sharp 24 U8  
d/g.fg/a.bc/b.ga/g.r

(ii) 5A14BBE5A14B

1 sharp 24 U16

d./g..fg..b/b..ag..d/g..fg..b/a...r

(iii) 52BAB212C1AD

1 sharp 38 U8  
d/g..(agf)/efga(afgf)/d

prophesied in the later years of the thirteenth century; but the ballad is separated from the person by the intervening romance. It is a case of popular verse which, by the working of tradition, has become a ballad. The story of his ride to Elf-land, in company with the Queen of the fairies, is made memorable by one supremely vivid stanza:

For forty days and forty nights  
           he wade thro red blude to the knee,  
 and he saw neither sun nor moon,  
           but he heard the roaring of the sea.

In *Tam Lin* (39) also we are concerned with the elves and fairies, but the hero is himself human and a changeling. The ballad is uniquely Scottish, and would take its place in the first half-dozen in Europe. Everything conspires to hold our interest: the love of a mortal for a supernatural being, and especially for one of the damned, cannot fail to move our hearts; the fatalism and courage of the girl who redeems her lover; the fantastic transformations of the captured Tam Lin and the fruitless anger of the Queen o' Fairies are expressed in words uniformly direct and poignant.

A number of ballads are concerned with the making and undoing of wicked enchantments: *Kemp Owyne*, *Alison Gross*, *The laily Worm* (34-6), *Broomfield Hill* (43), *Willie's Lady* (6), *The Mother's Malison* (216), *Burd Isabel and Earl Patrick* (257), *The Knight's Ghost* (265), and *The Earl of Mar's Daughter* (270). This group is almost entirely Scottish. Its first member has Scandinavian connexions, and *The Mother's Malison* makes use of a motif employed also in Piedmont and Rumania. Our ballads have no share in the merman cycle common to Scandinavia and North Germany, but one encounters the Shetland superstition that seals become human and have human children (*The great Silkie of Sule Skerry*, 113). It can hardly be a medieval ballad, since the deserted lady is to marry a 'proud gunner', who will kill the silkie with his first shot.

Ballads concerning revenants are found in both countries. *Sweet William's Ghost* (77) belongs to the *Lenore* tradition, and is a source of Bürger's poem. It would be hard to fix the focus of radiation for this legend. *The Suffolk Miracle* (272) is a version of the Greek ballad of *Constantine and Arete* or *The Dead Brother's Return*, brought directly to England by sea during the eighteenth century.

The twin legends of the lover's and the brother's return from the grave have often been deemed to be one. To identify them appears to me wrong, both because the motivation is different, and because the lines of their diffusion indicate foci at opposite ends of Europe. Excessive grief interferes with the repose of the dead in *The Unquiet Grave* (78) and *The Wife of Usher's Well* (79). To this class of ballads we have to assign also *Proud Lady Margaret* (47), *Fair Margaret* (74), the late *James Harris, the demon lover* (243)—more impressive in the superscription than in the text—and *Willie's fatal Visit* (255).

Child's first three ballads and *Captain Wedderburn* (46) are riddling ballads, belonging to the same tradition as the Eddic *Alvismál* and the Danish *Ungen Svejdal*.

The use of the supernatural is, thus, a characteristic mark of English and Scottish balladry when contrasted with that of France, and it is also a principal link of union with Denmark and Norway. The bulk of the corpus, however, consists of those stock amatory adventures and conspicuous crimes which fill most European ballad books. The themes come from all sides; they are almost as often southern as northern. *The Clerk's twa Sons of Oxenford* (72) is the French *Scholars of Ponthieu*, and *The gay Goshawk* (96) is the French *King Louis' Daughter*, which seems to have Italian elements. *The twa Magicians* (44), concerning the pursuit of a loved one by a lover who will persist however she transform herself, reproduces a widespread theme which is ultimately connected with the Greek myth of Proteus; another use, and a finer one, is made of transformations in *Tam Lin*. *Reedisdale and Wise William* and *The twa Knights* (246, 268) are independent Scottish versions of *Marianson's Rings*, which has its centre probably in Italy. Curiously enough the march of the story in *The twa Knights* resembles more intimately the Greek *Maurianos* than any of the intervening versions, though there is no reason in this case to infer a direct contact between a Scottish and a Greek ballad-monger. *The baffled Knight* (112) is English, and belongs to a tradition begun by France; it happens also to correspond with a Danish ballad. On the other hand, a Scandinavian origin must be postulated for *Fair Annie* (62) and *Lord Thomas and fair Annet* (73), *Earl Brand or the Douglas Tragedy* (7), *The twa Sisters* (10), and a considerable number more. A notable feature is the absence of German or Dutch ballads among us. Arising in the fourteenth century, and



still not very numerous in the fifteenth, German ballads began to expand across the frontiers in the sixteenth century, following the south-eastern and north-eastern ways. But in the sixteenth century England had become a land of broadside ballads, with many original composers and a dying oral tradition. Scotland, separated from Holland and Germany by the length of England, was in contact with France by its alliance and with Norway and Denmark by its trade relations. Hence *Hallewijn* seems to have reached us, not directly from the Low Countries, but from Scandinavia. We have to wait until Scott translated *Lenore*, *The noble Moringer*, *Sempach*, *The Fire-king*, and *The Erl-king*, and then the contact is not of oral tradition.

There are cases in which, whether a tradition be indigenous or not, it is connected with us by the superior vigour of our versions. *Lord Randal* (12) is such a one, and has spread—words and music together—to Italy, which borrows so little directly from Britain. *Edward* (13) is even more distinctive. The theme of fratricide is common in all balladries, and the particular treatment given it here is found in the Scandinavian countries (as in the Swedish *Sven i Rosengård*), and even in Finland (*Werinen Poika*—one of the modern type of imported ballads). The method of sharp question and evasive answer is also commonly used: for an adulteress in the Spanish *Blancaniña* or a profligate girl in the Danish *Witty Answer*, for a husband's murderess in the Czech *Murderous Wife*, and an infanticide in the Polish *Marcisia*. Many of these are fine ballads, but none is full of such breathless anxiety, none so stark, as the Scottish *Edward*. The questions come hotly, but the delaying refrain allows for the embarrassment of the mother and the evasive boy as in

‘Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,

*Edward, Edward?*

Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,

and why sae sad gang yee O?’

‘O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,

*Mither, mither,*

O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,

and I had nae mair bot hee O.’

A similar claim could be made for *Child Waters* (63), the cruel husband, a ballad with closer analogues in Italy and Spain than in Scandinavia. It is both English and Scottish, as is *The three*

*Ravens* or *Twa Corbies* (26), which has travelled as far as Russia in recent times. The number of ballads of really first-rate quality in Child's collection is high. One may cite 'honoris causa' *The Flower o' Northumberland*, *Clerk Saunders*, *Leesom Brand*, *The Lass o' Roch Royal*, *Young Beichan*, *Little Musgrave*, *Young Hunting*, and *Babylon*. It is not only that the story is well handled, but individual verses are often of surprising power and beauty, proving how great a reserve of true poetical skill was available for the composition of our ballads. By contrast with the pedestrian style of such recent pieces as *The Lord of Lorn*, *The Suffolk Miracle*, *The famous Flower of Serving-men*, and *James Harris*, we form some estimate of the harm done to style by the broadcasting of ballad journalese.

It is not necessary to go into the history of ballad journalism in England, since it has no international significance. From the Tudor ballad-mongers onwards the broadside ballad was the most direct means of impressing the common man for some political purpose. Their value for historians was recognized by Selden, and it was doubtless of them that one wrote that he cared not who made a people's laws, if he made their songs. Superseded by the news-sheet in due course, the broadside ballad did not wholly lose its influence until the spread of compulsory education deprived it of its public. It was still possible for boys to stop Macaulay in the street as he was reading a paper, and to ask him to recite the supposed ballad to them. Though the whole public is now a reading public, the demand for oral entertainment still exists, and is satisfied by the lamentable products of the music-hall and of crooners.

English settlers in America took with them the debris of the national ballads. The versions encountered in the Appalachians and elsewhere are of definitely English ancestry, and in no case do they contain variants superior to those of Scottish tradition. In general they show a certain deterioration of taste, due to the corrupting influence of broadsides; yet the damage is not so very considerable. Many texts are old, reaching back to the seventeenth century. The use of melodies in the old modes, employing the pentatonic and hexatonic scales, is a guarantee of authenticity. In general, it appears that the melodies have been well preserved or even improved in quality. The collection of Appalachian ballads by Campbell and Sharp contains no less than thirty-five which are

in Child's collection, together with eighteen unknown to him. Ballads have been encountered in more than half of the United States and in the English provinces of Eastern Canada; in Quebec there are traditional French ballads, Scandinavian communities in North America have their 'viser', and the Spanish and Portuguese elements of South and Central America their 'romances'. The 'love songs' (as they are called by those who sing them) of English origin stand as typical of all the balladry of the New World, since they alone have been extensively collected and intensively studied.

Among those which survive from medieval tradition the greatest popularity attaches to the sentimental *Barbara Allan*, the adulterous *Little Musgrave*, and the tragic *Douglas Tragedy*. Innumerable versions of these pieces seem to be obtainable in all parts. Their survival is part of a certain limitation of interest. The modern singer prizes above all a love song, and the historical and supernatural ballads have receded from his ken. In addition to these pieces there are many more modern ballads of British origin and plebeian cast, such as *The Butcher's Boy*, *Botany Bay*, *The Keys of Heaven*, *The Waggoner's Lad*, of sentimental or horrific import. Such ballads serve as the models for new creations on the American continent, which are of interest as springing from a kind of neo-medieval society. Some of them convey news in the broadside fashion. So *Springfield Mountain*, which appears to be of the eighteenth century, tells how John and Molly Bland died, he of snake-bite, she of poison in the attempt to suck the wound; *Frankie and Albert* is a 'crime passionel' in the pedestrian style:

When Frankie shot Albert, he fell down on his knees,  
looked up at her and said, 'Oh! Frankie, please,  
don't shoot me no mo', don't shoot me no mo'.  
'Oh, turn me over doctor; turn me over slow,  
turn me over on my right side, 'cause the bullet am hurtin' me so.  
I was her man, but I done her wrong.'

It is a strange relative of *Donna Lombarda*!

The highlanders of Virginia and the Carolinas are a remote and self-contained folk not unlike the ballad 'people' of the Middle Ages. For another reason the American negroes form a modern ballad community. Living among the whites, they are cut off by social and racial distinctions which force the coloured folk to keep to themselves. They are endowed with a keen musical sense and

a unique gift of improvisation; but they are not suited for a more reflective art. Their gifts are displayed, apart from the famous 'spirituals', in numerous ballads, peculiarly fluid in style. What constitutes any one ballad is a certain coherence of inner structure, but not any contexture of words. Almost any verse can appear in almost any ballad; improvisation and tricks of memory deform the tales almost out of recognition, and throw them together in strange confusion. John Henry, a gigantic steel-driver, and John Hardy, a murderer, have been confused in this manner. Rude and plebeian as they are, there is some suggestion of the old economy of effect in negro ballads, as in *Stagolee*:

Stagolee was a bully man, an' ev'ybody knowed,  
when dey seed Stagolee comin', to give Stagolee de road.  
Stagolee started out, he gave his wife his han':  
'Good-bye, darlin', I'm goin' to kill a man.'

The cowboys on the western ranges had also their peculiar interests, which have found expression in ballads. The type has disappeared with the annihilation of the herds of bison that once roamed the plains, but while the horsemen continued they had to find such recreation as they could in singing beside their camp-fires or while riding. *The Old Chisholm Trail* is a catalogue of cowboy woes, not unlike the *Blighty* of 1918, and ending in the same hope of release:

Goin' back to town to draw my money,  
goin' back home to see my honey.  
With my knees in the saddle and my seat in the sky,  
I'll quit punching cows in the sweet by and by.  
*Coma ti yi youpy, youpy ya, youpy ya,*  
*coma ti yi youpy, youpy ya.*

The occupation was seasonal, as was that of the lumberjacks, who had their own heroes Paul Bunyan and Young Munroe, but no ballads of notable merit.

#### 4. *Germany and the Low Countries*

The supreme merit of the German ballad collectors has been to realize to the full the importance of ballad melodies. It is not that they anticipated other scholars in this respect. On the contrary, the collections made between the dates of Herder and Uhland—the collections which, in fact, have exerted a powerful influence on the

modern German lyric—were of texts alone. Ludwig Erk and Franz Böhme, however, amassed a vast number of tunes from popular traditional singing and from old books. So numerous are they, and so securely anchored to specified times and places, that it is possible only in the *Deutscher Liederhort* to embark on comparative studies of tune variations comparable to those of the texts. These authors themselves assembled the melodies, without more exactly studying them. John Meier, in a work still in progress, restricting his view to the more famous narrative ballads, conducts a systematic examination of the tunes. He is able to draw on the less regularly collected material of other countries. Tunes to be compared are written in staff notation, the one immediately above the other, so that one can follow at a glance, with more or less accuracy, the editor's comments.<sup>1</sup>

To the musician there is little to be gained by separating ballads from other forms of traditional singing; indeed, the melodies of popular lyrics are often superior to the less venturesome narrative airs. Erk and Böhme's collection, when compared with those of Child and Grundtvig, is markedly lyrical; only one half of their materials are relevant to the present study. The connotation of the words 'Lied' and 'Volkslied' is very vague. One may distinguish more precisely 'Volkslied', 'Ballade', and 'Romanze' as lyric, lyrical narrative, and narrative; but the distinction is liable to break down in practice. Firstly, the German ballad is stanzaic; it has a lyrical origin, and there are lyrical elements present at all times. It is true that the narrative element is marked in *Lindenschmid*, *Agnes Bernauer*, *Stortebeker*, and other masterpieces of the fifteenth century. But this tradition also tends to become more and more lyrical. In the ballads of landsknechts and reiters in the sixteenth century, the narrative is used to suggest an emotion. A fine piece like *Franz von Sickingen* exists not merely to describe the hero's fall, but also as an outlet for Protestant grief. In modern military ballads, such as *Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz* and *Sedan* there is little more narrative than is required to describe a pathetic situation; the rest of the ballad is an appeal to a commonly felt emotion. The German corpus is therefore both formally and intrinsically lyrical, and it has exerted this kind of influence upon its imitators. The neighbouring lands have lyrics in abundance or lyrical narratives, but few pure narratives. The relative weakness of the narrative

<sup>1</sup> See Note I, p. 388.

element makes German balladry so much the less corporate. Verse forms are very different from one to another, and connecting threads of interest are relatively slender. The richness of German folk-song is undoubted, but it is dispersed, just as the nation itself was dispersed into many principalities. It escapes, perhaps, some of the monotony of the Spanish 'romances', Danish 'viser', and Serbian 'junačke pesme', but it can hardly have exerted the same massed force. Though no medieval people enjoyed the advantage of such collections as we now have, those who expected the repetition of a certain type of narrative in a certain type of verse must have formed some collective idea of the whole. As a whole, the ballads, especially historical ones and others believed to be true, must have moulded the Danish, Spanish, and Serbian minds to a uniform pattern; the dispersed German 'Volkslieder' correspond to a dispersed nationality.

By way of compensation, German balladry (which extends far beyond the political frontiers of Germany) displays a sturdy regional variety. The songs of Swiss pikemen from Sempach (1386) to Marignano (1515) built up a professional tradition, which was taken over by their professional rivals—the landsknechts and reiters—once the victory of Pavia (1525) had showed the superiority of the new methods. These landsknechts and reiters formed the armies of the Protestant princes, so that the stirring ballads of the Thirty Years' War and its predecessors belong to the same style and model. The landsknechts added, however, ballads on the private aspects of their professional life: the devil-may-care freedom of their expeditions, carousing in taverns, debt and beggary, robbery and the rope. These are ballads of recurrent situations and emotions, comparable with the domestic ballads of civilians during the same epoch. They pass readily into the camp songs of the modern conscript armies.

Austria and, in general, Upper Germany, was subjected to an indigenous literary influence which was not immediately sensible elsewhere. It is from the South, therefore, that ballads come coloured by the personalities and styles of Minnesingers and Mastersingers. *Tannhäuser* and *Möringer* are legends which have congealed upon the fame of Minnesingers; the *Count of Rome* is a product of the Mastersingers. Traces of literary convention, however, extend in the ballads beyond those of definitely literary origin. In modern times the distinctive Bavarian dialect occurs in some

soldiers' ballads to express humorous contempt. So we have the Bavarian *Schnadahüßl* of 1870, which begins

'Twas Bismarck spun the fabric,  
'twas Moltke cut it square,  
and for those poor old Frenchies 'twas  
a miserable affair.

More obvious is the satiric intention in another :

Napoleons One and  
Two are under sod,  
No. Three is in clink,  
No. Four—help him God!

Plattdeutsch had been used, with the same satiric intention, in ballads of the War of Liberation.

In Flanders and the Low Countries one marks the proximity of France. There is a more witty and cynical turn to the narratives, more criticism of the lower religious, and the use of typically French situations. A similar attitude seems to characterize the Rhinelands. Cologne is a capital towards which Flemish eyes turn. In other pieces there is some special affinity with Hanover and Brunswick. The ballads of the Low Countries are, in fact, an inseparable part of the balladry of Low Germany. The majority of pieces are held in common, and it would be extremely difficult to say where any one arises. One notes, however, the strong civic sense of the Flemings, which sometimes finds expression in their songs. The sea-robbers of the North Sea and Baltic give rise to some fine ballads which are North German; so are the ballads of mermen. North Germany and the Low Countries were equally affected by the tide of High German ballads, when this began to flow strongly northwards in the sixteenth century, and it is across this area that tunes and words reached Denmark and Sweden. The mingling of Low and High German ballads is more complete than those of England and Scotland. Separation would be utterly impossible, nor is it feasible to indicate any general distinctions. Throughout the whole area there is no suggestion of the danced ballad, apart from an example from Dittmarschen, close up against the Danish border.

Political verse, in Latin and German, flourished for some centuries before the rise of the true ballad, and examples are given by most anthologists. At what moment we can identify oral traditional narratives it is hard to determine. The authentic note is not heard

in the pieces, reproduced by Liliencron, on the alliance of Bern and Freiburg in 1243, the defeat of Ottokar II in 1278, or the battle of Gölthheim in 1298. The second of these begins in a spirited manner:

The banners and the host  
began to take up post,  
beat drums and trumpets blare,  
troops, moving everywhere,  
advance unwavering.  
On the field a song men sing  
'In God's name now march we'.  
Many wept—credit me—  
their sins and sinful life,  
their children and their wife.

It is spirited and semi-popular, but it is not a ballad. It is not even in the form of a ballad, which is, in Germany, stanzaic. The necessary qualities are present in the few lines concerning Lippold of Homboken (1311), which come from Low Germany, and in the song of the Kerels (1328-9):

Now shall we of the Kerels sing,  
folk of a wretched sort,  
the lords they'll in subjection bring!—  
a long, long beard they sport.  
Their shoddy clothes are rent and torn,  
upon their heads a hood to match,  
askew their hats and caps are worn,  
hosen and shoes show many a patch.  
*So curds and whey and bread and cheese  
they eat and eat and eat all day;  
and so the churl gets in a daze,  
who eats and eats more than he may.*

The great series of Swiss victories in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gave rise to a series of stirring songs which had genuine popular acceptance, as they celebrated Sempach (1386), Näfels, Birs, Granson, Murten, Nancy, and the Swabian War of 1495-8. They built up a sense of nationhood, of the invincibility of the pikemen, and of professional soldiering. The *Battle of Sempach* (Erk-Böhme 231) is one of the earliest of German ballads. It originated in a little dialogue in couplets (Spruch) composed, apparently, while the war still lasted. The Austrian invader threatens to hang the insurgents, and the mayor of Sempach replies with a list of the



Lucerne, Schweiz, Uri, and Unterwalden. The Steer of Uri is mentioned in this 'Spruch'. Hard on its heels came a ballad in which the speakers are the Lion (for Leopold) and the Steer, and the poet took liberties with the event. He scornfully supposes that the lowlanders have come to confess to a Swiss pastor:

'Pray tell us where's the parson,  
that we our sins may tell?'  
'He sits at home in Schweiz, sirs,  
and he'll confess you well,  
good penance give to you;  
from cutting halbards' edges  
you'll get his blessing too!'

In the last elaboration, the ballad becomes long and circumstantial, setting forth the legend of Winkelried's brave feat of gathering the enemy spears into his own bosom. This last phase is due to Halbsuter of Lucerne, composing in or about 1480. The legend of William Tell is international in substance, since it is found independently as far away as Norway; but it is now inseparable from Switzerland (Erk-Böhme 32).

Religious disturbances in Germany gave rise to a number of poems, which are scarcely to be reckoned among ballads. Extravagant penances came as an emotional reaction from the terrors of the Black Plague, and troops of Flagellants roamed the land, performing their rites of self-torture. Their songs were, no doubt, popular and traditional in kind, but were primarily devout lyrics, lacking any developed narrative. The Schism of the Church, somewhat later, perplexed the consciences of Christians, and produced political verse designed for the widest possible circulation, but never to be dissociated from the name, or at least standpoint and personality, of the author. Of this nature are, for instance, Thomas Prischuch of Augsburg's 1,860 couplets on *The Council's Foundation*, and the 100 couplets of Johann Engelmar addressed to the Council of Constance. The Hussite movement, occurring at this time, has produced a Czech lyric, but no ballad.

The ballad style found inspiration in one of its perennial themes: the doings of celebrated malefactors. In the south these were robber barons, of whom Götz von Berlichingen has become, under Goethe's moulding hands, the eternal type; in the north there were also sea-rovers. The moment of inspiration is the moment of their fall. Later ballad-mongers, with decadent instincts, work a trite

moral into such pieces; but the earlier ones are more objective. They relate some incidents of wild audacity together with the final scenes of arrest and execution, so that the general impression is the more gallant. Fine examples are *Epple von Gailingen*, whose head was 'put between his legs' in 1381, *Lindenschmid* (c. 1490), *Schüttensam* (1466), and *Fritsche Grad* (1430) (Erk-Böhme 230, 246-7, 242). *Thijsken van den Schilde* (Fallersleben 23, Erk-Böhme 249) is a ballad of the same sort, from the Low Countries, but with rather less valiant tone. The robber-baron was a concept so purely German that there is nothing quite similar in other balladries. The Lusatian *Handrias and Rajsenberk* (Haupt and Schmalzer, i, 14) is evidence of the almost complete Germanism of these Slavic ballads. The tune of *Lindenschmid* was new, and served to shape the stanzas of many new ballads.

In the fourteenth century the state of Denmark was much perplexed. Valdemar IV had launched an attack on the Hanseatic towns and made the seas unsafe, and the succession of his daughter Margaret was disputed. The uncertainty of trade favoured the rise of piracy, especially when Margaret saw in the freebooters a possible source of strength against the Hansa. The proclamation of peace in 1383 let loose a flood of marauders upon the commerce of Hamburg, Lübeck, and other trading towns; and in 1395 a reconciliation between Sweden and Denmark set adrift the marauders who had made Wismar and Rostock their lairs. Three bands were organized for the systematic pillage of the Russian coasts, Friesland, and the Spanish sea. The leaders were Gödeke Michel, Wichmann, Wigbold, and Claus Stortebecker. The expedition organized from Hamburg against the last of these in 1402, and its success, were recorded in a most vigorous Low German ballad, *Stortebecker* (Erk-Böhme 233):

Stortebecker and Michael Gödecke,  
they were two robbers equally,  
by water and not by land, sirs,  
till God was angered grievously,  
and brought them bitter shame, sirs.

They took them to a paynim lord,  
and with the heathen traffic hold,  
his daughter will they marry,  
they rend and scream, like bears so bold,  
and Hamburg's beer drink gladly.

Spake Stortebecker on his own:  
 'The Western Sea to me's well known,  
 some beer from thence I'll carry,  
 and Hamburg's burghers, money-blown,  
 will pay our merry party.'

Yet another topic for historical ballads in Germany was found in the endless private and public feuds between nobles and cities. *Busso von Alvensleben of Erxleben* (Arnold 20) records a raid on Altmarkt in 1372; the narrative is firm and vigorous, and shows knowledge of the scene of action. Sometimes small groups of such ballads cohere into little cycles, such as those which describe the feud between Soest and the Archbishop of Cologne in 1446-7. Better than these, however, are some isolated pieces, such as the Flemish *Jakob van Artevelde*:

It fell upon a Monday,  
 on a Monday afternoon,  
 folk came together stormily  
 Sir James to set upon.

From suburbs came the troopers,  
 peace to the folk to bring,  
 but traitors they rushed inwards  
 and threw down everything.

Into the house they hurried,  
 the ground was red with blood:  
 Sir James he died for Flanders,  
 his soul went up to God.

The pearl of medieval German ballads, however, is *The fair Bernauerin* (Erk-Böhme 92). Agnes Bernauerin, of humble origin, gained the love of Albrecht of Bavaria, Duke Ernst's son, and consented to marry him after a seemly resistance. The Duke, like Afonso IV of Portugal in a similar case, took the way of murder. In 1435 he had the unhappy woman thrown into the Danube. She might have saved herself by swimming had not men forced her under with long poles; the ballad heightens the pathos by recording her appeal to the Blessed Virgin, and by causing her to die at her own request, refusing the way of safety which was open to criminal women willing to marry the hangman. The poem was not composed before Duke Albrecht had instituted an eternal mass for her soul in 1437 (renewed in 1447). The kidnapping of the princes of Saxony

in 1455 is cause for the half-allegorical ballad of *Kunz von Kaufungen* (Erk-Böhme 239).

In the sixteenth century the German historical ballad reaches its apogee. The century opened with the rivalry of the landsknechts and pikemen, expressed in the scornful *Brother Veit and Brother Heini* (Erk-Böhme 261), à propos of the battle of Marignano (1516). Brother Veit is the landsknecht; Heini appears in another piece beginning

How now, you knavish Switzers,  
you Heinis, oh so bold!

Yet another sings

Hear how the Switzer yokels  
landsknechts have vilified.

This rivalry reached its height in the battle of Pavia, where the German landsknechts and Spanish infantry broke the once invincible pikemen. A new 'tune of Milan' arose—apparently a variant of the old *Hildebrand* melody—and was used for a five-line poem on Pavia; hence it is frequently known as the 'Pavia tune'. There was also an eight-line Pavia melody composed and first sung by Hans von Würzburg. The battle developed in a zoological garden. The artillery breached the wall, and the Swiss fled before Georg von Frundsberg and his landsknechts. A lyrical piece ascribes the whole victory to him:

Frundsberg's Sir George,  
Frundsberg's Sir George,  
he has Pavia's battle won,  
Pavia's battle won in a park,  
in eight hours and a half won land and folk.

The King of France,  
The King of France,  
he has Pavia's battle lost,  
Pavia's battle lost in a park,  
in eight hours and a half lost land and folk.

(Arnold 32.)

Apart from their victories the landsknechts had to sing the varied misfortunes of their way of life. These are historical by their circumstances, though they do not rise normally out of particular events. The narrative is important chiefly as leading to the expression of some emotion: delight in a swashbuckling career, freedom from

restraint, contempt for labouring men, the hardships of the service, the profits of summer and miseries of winter:

The wintry rime and chilly snow  
do our poor riders grievous woe,  
what easement have we got?  
How may we then our reckoning close,  
when ride the roads we cannot, ay cannot?

In summer time the sheep we drive,  
and comely maids do troop behind,  
and on my grey I'm swinging,  
in green shaw up and down we ride  
and hear the birdies singing, ay singing.

(Arnold 65, 2.)

Landsknechts and reiters waged war on the settled community. They drank up their savings and were robbed by the taverners. When crippled they had to beg, and when starving they turned highwaymen. The latter end of the discharged landsknecht was the gallows, and under their shadow he was already dubbed 'black-neck'. All these things are expressed in dare-devil songs with some admixture of narrative.

In addition to the war with France there was the war with the Turk. The colossal disaster of Mohacz (1526) has found in *The Queen of Hungary* (Erk-Böhme 276) pathetic expression. It was set to a love-tune: a lament by the young queen for the youth who is more lover than king. This dramatic treatment makes the piece superior to straightforward narratives, which are also encountered. The victory of Sankt Gotthard (1664) and the relief of Vienna by Sobieski (1683) are other landmarks of Turkish frontier warfare. The series is closed with the famous *Prince Eugene* (Erk-Böhme 324), celebrating his triumph at Belgrade in 1717.

The Reformation gave to Germany one language—the language of Luther's Bible—and a magnificent body of religious lyrics. Though their texts are not liable to alteration by traditional performances, they are indubitably popular. Fine ballads arose from the same movement. *Ulrich von Hutten* (Arnold 29) is a grave monologue serving to voice the same passion as may be encountered in such political lyrics as *Praise God, ye pious Christians* (Arnold 27). The movement soon took a military turn, once the reformers were compelled to defend themselves against persecution; the soldiers available for its defence were the landsknechts

and reiters who had already their own professional balladry. *Sickingen* (Erk-Böhme 266) is thus a ballad of the reformers and of the landsknechts simultaneously, and is, like many of its kind, signed by the author (that is, by his classification as a landsknecht), and given for something new:

He who for us did newly frame  
this song, a landsknecht is by name,  
and well indeed he's singing:  
the news—and well he knows the same—  
from Landstal is he bringing, ay bringing.

The date is 1523; it is the personal aspect of Franz von Sickingen's fall, the death of a landsknecht chief, that the poet sings. Luther's death in 1546 coincided with a sharp ebb in the Protestant fortunes, which is expressed in *The Saxon Maiden* of 1548 (Arnold 34):

O God our Father in Christ Jesu,  
the orphan's only Father Thou!  
From my heart's ground I Thee beseech,  
and cry aloud in this my speech.

At first the speaker is anonymous. Later she declares herself to be the Saxon Maiden, terrified for her honour before the Spanish soldiery, and ready to deem him her true love who will free her from shame:

And whosoe'er best aideth then  
to me shall be the best of men,  
e'en be he young or be he gray  
or poor or twisted as he may.

Such man is one of real worth,  
his shall be praise in all the earth;  
a garland put I on his hair,  
entwined by my hands so fair.

The tune used was a hymn tune: *Oh God, uphold us by Thy word*.

The Saxon Maiden was, or came to be, the maiden fortress of Magdeburg. Its heroic resistance in 1551 called for a song 'to the tune of the city of Milan' (Erk-Böhme 293):

O Magdeburg, now hold thee fast,  
thou nobly builded house!  
There comes full many an outland guest,  
that wills to drive thee out.

The city declares her integrity and confidence:

‘The Maiden City is my name,  
well kent in every land,  
I trust the heavenly Christ will aid  
me with His mighty hand’.

This confidence, circulated on a flying-leaf in 1629 when Tilly was pressing his siege, greatly intensified the city's resistance. The metaphor could be used of other towns also, though without the paronomasia, as for Stralsund when besieged by Wallenstein in 1628. Fine as they are, they lack the specific magic of the Castilian *Abenámar*, in which a political statement is transmuted into the purest poetry.

The quantity of ballads does not diminish with the Thirty Years' War, though the quality is lower. The storm broke amid lampoons on Cardinal Esel, with jibes about *Esel* 'donkey'. The farcical reign of the 'Winter King' in 1618 gave cause for Imperialist laughter, and the death of the first Protestant leader, Mansfeldt, was finely lamented (Arnold i, p. 188). A quinquennium of Imperialist triumphs lies behind the heroic *Stralsund* and the tragic lament for Magdeburg: a bitter *Consolation for the pitiful slaughter of many thousand Christians in Magdeburg* (1631). The stages of the Protestant counter-attack—Leipzig, Breitenfeld, and Lützen—are duly recorded in songs, together with the death of Wallenstein. Other pieces express the lawlessness of the times, the abasement of the coinage, the destitution of the soldiery and of the peasants. The close of the war left the land exhausted but not at peace. The Swedes terrified northern districts until the Great Elector crushed them at Fehrbellin, on which there is a ballad. Oxenstjerna was a bogey who would make children pray, and

The Swedes are here,  
they've swept all clear,  
the windows they've shaken,  
the lead they've taken,  
and bullets have got  
and peasants have shot.

Yet one poet, writing of the peace of Saint Germain en Laye in 1679, had the courage to say:

All signs cannot deceive us,  
some day brings happier lot.

The happier lot came with the War of the Spanish Succession, in which there arose a cycle of ballads, of Austrian formation, about the heroic figure of Prince Eugene. Such poems were primarily of military inspiration. Soldiers have cultivated and propagated the 'volkslied' throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but in moments of crisis the soldiers have been the effective 'people'. The principal wars covered have been the Seven Years' War, the Napoleonic, and the Franco-Prussian of 1870. Some of those dictated by the War of Liberation are exceptionally fine, especially Ferdinand August's

With man and horse and waggon,  
so has our God them stricken!

Others, like *Father Blicher*, are humorous, though intense. In that period the line between written and oral verse is hard to trace, since many poems of literary style, but popular passion, gained universal currency. *The German Rhine*, *The Watch on the Rhine*, and *Deutschland über Alles* are cases in point. There are Austrian barrack-room ballads of real merit, such as *The Tenth Jägers* and *By Serajevo on the Hill*, and the transfer of ballads from one setting to another is a frequent phenomenon. The pieces indicate a general situation or emotion. A soldier's last words are topical both at Custozza and Sedan, though the latter battle imposes itself 'a fortiori'. These are conscripts' ballads. In the eighteenth century soldiers were impressed rather than conscripted, and there was an evil traffic in cannon-fodder among the lesser German princes. The fears and hates engendered by this practice find outlet in *O Strassburg*, *In Strassburg on the Rampart*, and *The pitiless Captain*. That manner has passed. The conscript ballads of the Austrian armies exist not only in German, but also in Magyar and Czech, and to some extent in Rumanian, since all these different nationalities were subjected to the same discipline in the same camps. They account for a remarkable uniformity in this section of the modern balladries circumjacent to Austria.

A small group of ballads is based on the medieval German national epos. For the 'younger' *Hildebrand* (Erk-Böhme 21, 22) an older model might be claimed. The epic fragment of the same name dates from the ninth century. Between ballad and epos there are no verbal resemblances of note, and the younger poem is altered in a fundamental way, a way first found in the lost saga of



*Dietrich von Bern* which was translated into Old Norse in the early thirteenth century. The theme is the battle of two heroes, father and son. The epic ending is tragic; that of the saga and ballad paints a family reunion. The particulars are fuller in the ballad than in the saga, so that the former would seem to be a later production. The fame of the Hildebrand tune in the early sixteenth century is proof that the ballad is medieval, dating perhaps from the thirteenth or early fourteenth century. A Low German *King Ermanaric's Death* (Erk-Böhme 23) has been preserved by a flying-leaf of the year 1560. It is a free composition based, no doubt, on the lost saga or some derivative. The poet, caring little for tradition, describes Dietrich's journey to Breisach, his fight in the palace against a vast retinue, and his killing of Ermanaric—a narrative which will not fit into any of the Gothic legends, but distantly resembles the episode of Osantrix in the saga.

The name and fame of Dietrich pervade the vulgar *Heldenbuch*. There is there a certain Woldietrich, so called from having been protected as a baby by a wolf. His adventures include intervention on behalf of a lion against a dragon, imprisonment in a dragon's lair and escape, fights with giants and dragons, and the capture of a supernatural wife. There is a German and Dutch ballad, *The Huntsman from Greece* (Erk-Böhme 24), which deals with the last matter. Woldietrich's father was Hugdietrich, emperor of Constantinople. His achievement was that he disguised himself as a woman to win the princess of Salonica without her father's knowledge. The motif probably survives from the Danish epos. In *Hagbard and Signe* it is used, both in the epic and the ballad, to lead up to an impressive 'dénouement'. In *Hugdietrich* and the German and Dutch ballads (Erk-Böhme 140) the motif has become a commonplace, and is part of no momentous action. By way of preface the *Heldenbuch* recounts the adventures of Otnit or Ortnit, the Lombard king of Garda. By the help of his father, the dwarf Alberich, he won for himself a heathen king's daughter; he extended his power at the expense of the Greeks, but perished in battle with a dragon. His adventures have no ballad consequences in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have used A. von Keller's edition of *Das Deutsche Heldenbuch*, Stuttgart, Litterarischer Verein, 1867, which contains *Otnit*, *Woldieterich* (with *Hugdieterich*), *Der Rosengarten zu Worms*, *Der kleine Rosengarten oder der kleine König Laurin*.

No trace of the Nibelungs' adventures is found in German or Dutch balladry, but there are several pieces which recount the characteristic incident of the other great poem, *Kudrún* (Erk-Böhme 178-81). The heroine is a serving-maid at an inn. The whole group, therefore, belongs to the epoch when the ballad was no longer knightly, and taverns had replaced palaces as the normal scenes of adventure. The epic is of the thirteenth century; the ballads, as they now survive, are of the sixteenth or seventeenth. The landlady's ill treatment of the heroine is implicit, and the contemptuous attitude of the man who encounters her at the inn is also implicit. In the epic both are fully accounted for. The man recognizes her, as in the epic, for his long-lost sister; the ballads do not trouble us with the figure of her lover Ortwin, for they simplify the story and prune away every detail that can be spared. Recognition in one case is by a bathtub which the girl possesses. It is an unlikely object, but a reminiscence of the scene in the epic in which she is encountered washing clothes on the sea-shore. A much older ballad, however, is *Die Meererin* (Meier 4), which reproduces the epic episode:

How soon afoot is the young sea-maid,  
the beautiful, the young sea-maid !

In the morning early goes she out,  
she goes to launder the fine cloth

To the wide, wide sea, to the deep sea.  
She begins to wash, she washes clean.

At sea there swims a ship so small,  
and sit therein two youthful lords:

'Good morning, beautiful sea-maid,  
thou beautiful, thou young sea-maid.'

'Now thank you, thank you, youthful lords;  
of good mornings my store is small !'

He from his finger took a ring:  
'Thou fair sea-maiden, have this thing !'

'Nay, sir, I am no fair sea-maid,  
for I am but the laundry-maid !'

Into their ship the maid they guide  
and sail away over ocean wide.

'Thou art indeed the fair sea-maid,  
the beautiful, the young sea-maid !'

She takes a kerchief in her hand,  
and sails the sea, and comes to land.

When they were come unto that place,  
they began to kiss and to embrace  
and there they kissed her, that sea-maid,  
that beautiful, that young sea-maid.

It is in this earlier and more authentic form that the ballad crossed France and became the *Don Bueso* of the Spanish corpus. Meier's third ballad, *The Wooing*, is also, in all probability, a highly generalized version of an episode in *Kudrûn*.

There are also reminiscences of French narratives of a romantic or epic sort. The Flemish *Flos and Blancflos* (Erk-Böhme 81) had less success as a ballad than had the romance in prose, but in *Brennenberg* or *Der Bremberger* (Erk-Böhme 100) the Germans and Netherlanders found a satisfying equivalent for the French *Castellan de Coucy* and the Provençal legend of Cabestanh. Probably a modern invention is the Flemish *Roland and Godelinde* (Erk-Böhme 91), composed to attract interest to the nuns of Godelinde's cloister at Ghent. The restlessness of a princess at night, causing her to go to a hayloft to sleep with an ostler, is the motif of *The Nutmeg-tree* (Erk-Böhme 141). Its author had been three times in France. In Spain the motif is used in a Carolingian setting.

The influence of Minnesang and Meistersang on the ballads produced some new legends which, though undoubtedly preserved by oral tradition, have the perfections of written literature also. The greatest of these are *The noble Moringer* (Erk-Böhme 28), and *Tannhäuser* (Erk-Böhme 17, 18). Each opens with the separation of lovers at dawn, that is, with an 'aubade'; each uses the name of a Minnesinger for its hero. In the first, Moringer (Heinrich von Morungen, who flourished round about 1200), on the morrow of his wedding, leaves his home; he appoints a tryst of seven years with his bride, but stays away longer than that. At last he returns when she is about to be forced to accept a new husband, makes himself known by a ring dropped in a cup, and displaces his rival. The story is older than its hero, and is found in the same complex form under other names (Duke Heinrich in Germany, Hind Horn in England, Count Dirlos in Spain, &c.), having a tendency to attach

itself to national heroes (Marko Kraljević in Serbia, Dobrynja in Russia). As *The Husband's Return* it appears destitute of most of its details in French folk-song and in Germany (Erk-Böhme 49, 93, 110, 191). There are many possible 'dénouements': the soldier may kill his rival or find the match already complete; if only a suitor, he finds his fiancée has been fickle; there may be an accommodation with this rival, such as the offer to him of his sister to wife, or the lady may be considered guilty in a greater or less degree, and the ballad end with a blood bath. But in the best and more developed ballads there is a precise contexture of incidents, as described above, which it seems right to associate with *The noble Moringer* itself. *Tannhäuser* is a still finer ballad, in both High and Low German and later in Danish. It is of the fifteenth century, and has grown out of the songs by and attributed to the poet himself. The hero's heart is torn, like that of so many medieval men, between beauty and salvation. The Church, represented by Pope Urban IV, denies him salvation, and he turns back with passionate despair to his cult of sinful beauty.

*Henry the Lion* (Erk-Böhme 26, 27) exists in the form of ballads and mastersongs. It is a rambling romance which makes use of the old Dietrich legend for the hero's intervention to defend a lion against a serpent, and of the Moringer tradition for his absence and home-coming. Though unworthy, it has passed northward as far as Denmark, and has enriched Czech legendary history with a king Bruncvík. *Duke Ernst* (Erk-Böhme 25) is of great length, and should rather be deemed a romance than a ballad. *The Count of Rome* (Erk-Böhme 29) is undoubtedly a ballad, and as such has spread to Denmark and Sweden as well as to Holland. Its source is the mastersong of *Alexander von Metz oder der Graf im Pfluge*; and its characteristic motifs are the enslavement of the count, and his wife's heroic coming in disguise to release him. She comes disguised as a minstrel, and asks no reward from the Kaiser but the freedom of the wretched prisoner. These particulars, apart from the yoking of the count to the plough, are found in the Russian ballad of *Stavr Godinovič*, which is thus probably of German origin.

Two fine ballads inspired by Classical legends are *The two King's Children* and *The Evening Walk* (Erk-Böhme 83-5, 86-8). The former is the legend of Hero and Leander, derived from Ovid's *Heroides* through a Middle High German poem. The ballad is

equally common in Low and High German; the normal version seems to have been fashioned in the Netherlands. It has extended into Scandinavia by way of Denmark, and as far as Piedmont and Catalonia by way of France. The theme is popular in Lusatia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Latvia. Though the ballad is fine, finer still is the lyric which has sprung from it:

‘O Elsie, darling Elsie mine,  
how glad were I by thee!  
So are there two deep waters  
that sunder thee from me.’

‘That brings me bitter sorrow,  
dear comrade of my heart!  
From all my heart declare I,  
it is a bitter smart!’

‘Hope! time will bring an end, dear,  
hope! joy will yet be thine;  
all things will change for better,  
heart’s dearest Elsie mine!’

The *Evening Walk* is the legend of Pyramus and Thisbe with acknowledgements to the conventions of the ‘aubade’. In its medieval dress, with tower and watchman, and most of the classical details gone, the ballad is not unlike that of *Tristan’s Death* (Meier 9). *The Clerk in a Basket* (Erk-Böhme 144, 145), cynical and anti-clerical, is the legend of Vergil, suspended, according to medieval tradition, in a basket beneath the window of a lady whom he made senile efforts to dishonour. A mastersong on this subject exists, and Luther knew the ballad.

Ballads of Biblical origin are interesting chiefly when their material has been so transformed that the source is no longer apparent. The German *Ulinger* (Erk-Böhme 41, 42, 195) is one of these. Older than the German is the Dutch version, *Hallewijn* (Hoffmann von Fallersleben 9, 10), in which the resemblance of the name to the Biblical Holofernes is more apparent. According to this ballad a girl is beguiled from a castle by a knight who reveals himself as the murderer of her sisters. He orders her to prepare to die. There are various sequels to this order: in some she dies and her brothers avenge her death, in others they arrive in time to save her, and in others she gets a weapon by some trick and kills her persecutor. This last is the authentic version, and it has, in the

Dutch ballad, a sequel not found elsewhere. She encounters Hallelwijn's old mother. The old woman asks for news of her son, and the girl replies that he is dead and his head is on her own lap:

'Hallewyn your son is hunting gone,  
no more you'll see him your life long;  
Your son Sir Hallewyn is dead,  
here in my lap I bear his head,  
with his heart's blood my apron's red.'

To her sire's gate when that she came,  
her horn she blew like any man.

Her father, when he heard the same,  
joy filled him for that home she came.

Down sat they to a fair banquet,  
the head was on the table set.

These are the lines which identify the legend with the story of Judith and Holofernes. Without them, in the German versions for instance, the ballad appears to belong to the saga of Bluebeard, but for the fact that it contains no tabu. There is no closed room not to be entered; the villain is inspired by mere insensate blood-lust. It has spread outwards in all directions over the greater part of Europe, though probably not itself older than the fifteenth century. In France it has become *Renard the Woman-slayer*, and has descended thence to Italy and Spain (*Rico Franco*). In the Scandinavian lands it encountered the indigenous superstition about nixes. The hero became a malevolent spirit, a supernatural, and as such he appears in the Scottish *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight*. This superstitious increment is late, and there is no reason to include the ballad among those of supernatural adventures. As for the Bluebeard saga and the history of Gilles de Retz, the common features are probably due to contamination with the then existing ballad. Another Biblical ballad of interest is *The chaste Serving-man* (Erk-Böhme 76), which is, under a knightly disguise, the history of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. Inverted so that it is the man who tempts and falsely accuses, it is *The slanderous Chaplain* (Erk-Böhme 55).

These histories, though Biblical, have been secularized. Others have remained religious in intention, though they have drawn away from the Biblical text. A lyrical fragment on *Judas* has survived

from the fifteenth century, at least, when it was proverbial for any act of treachery:

Miserable Judas,  
what is this thou'st done,  
that thy Lord, thy Master,  
thus hast thou foredone!  
Therefore must thou suffer,  
in hell's torment lie.  
Lucifer's companion  
be for ever and aye.

*Kyrieleyson!*

The presentation in the Temple, the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection give cause for some beautiful pieces, which approximate to carols, and some carols have become indubitably traditional. The *Heavenly Lime* and the *Winter Rose* are exquisite:

There is a Rose has blossomed  
out of so sweet a root,  
as men of old have told us,  
from Jesse came the shoot;  
it grows a bud so bright  
in midmost cold of winter,  
just at the dead of night.

The rosebud that I mean, sirs,  
is that Isaiah said,  
To usward brought it only  
Mary, the cleanest Maid:  
by God's eternal might  
has she a Child begotten  
just at the dead of night.

The saints are not forgotten. The songs in their honour are sometimes narratives, sometimes appeals for aid. St. George, St. Lawrence, St. Catherine, St. Kilian, &c., are patrons much invoked. Some of the Marian legends have more originality and interest; for example, *St. Mary and the Shipman* (Erk-Böhme 2064). The ferryman attempted to violate his passenger, but as they approached the midmost of the strait the bells began to ring in her honour:

They rang and rang, both great and small,  
They rang and rang together all.

St. Mary kneeled upon a stone,  
the shipman's heart it sprang in two.

Moral tales and pious legends also have some exemplars worth quoting. Some are of souls rescued from condemnation at heaven's gate, such as *The pardoned Dancer*, *Three Sisters at Heaven's Gate*, and *The poor Soul*. *The Sultan's Daughter* (Erk-Böhme 2127, 2128) turns a sentimental history to pious uses; and a group of ballads exploits the matter of the old French fabliau of Maquerel, the devil who rode a priest's concubine to hell (Erk-Böhme 218, 219). The best of the group is *The Smith's Daughter* (Erk-Böhme 11) which isolates one tragic moment. It does not tell us why the smith's daughter should have been bewitched into a mare. We only know that the smith was forced to shoe her, and drew blood with the nails till she cried out who she was in her anguish. It is a moment of unspeakable sorrow in the lives of two sinners. Few ballads better illustrate the truth that often the half is better than the whole.

German ballads of supernatural adventure are less numerous and less eerie than those of Denmark, Norway, and Scotland, but they include some notable examples. The two merman legends (Erk-Böhme 1, 2) have been already discussed. Common to Denmark and the German seaboard, they have been claimed as German, and are in any case Germanic. In one version the location is given as the Jade Estuary; it may well be original. In some the girl of the second ballad is said to have been drowned in the Rhine, meaning thereby the sea. The Rübenthal (Erk-Böhme 3) is a hill sprite of German nationality, and there are some entertaining ballads about the humblest denizens of the other world: kobolds and poltergeists (Erk-Böhme 4-6). The metamorphosis of damsels into trees and flowers (Erk-Böhme 8-10) is a gracefully pathetic conceit. There is a changeling (Erk-Böhme 12), and a *Crowned Snake* (Erk-Böhme 13), who is held to her earthly lover by his possessing her crown, just as Bulgarian samodivas are the servants of those who keep their clothes. *Lenore* (Erk-Böhme 197-202) is the most famous ballad of revenants, on account of its consequences, not its merits. The Danish *Age and Else* and Scottish *Sweet William's Ghost* are superior by far. There are German equivalents for the *Orphan at her Mother's Grave*, the child who cannot rest in death because of its mother's weeping, the lover's talk with his fiancée in her tomb, &c. *The damp Shroud* or *Der Vorwirth* concerns a neglected dead husband who demands from his wife a new shroud; it is the source of the Czech *Rubaš*, possibly



the most impressive of Czech ballads. Sundry ballads concern themselves with dreams, generally of an allegorical sort, and one shows evildoers successfully cited before God's judgement seat. *The pied Piper of Hamelin*, *The fiddling Hunchback*, and *The Minstrel's Son* (Erk-Böhme 14-16) are wonderful adventures told to the credit of the profession. Erk connected the first of these stories both with the character of Woden, as inferred from the relics of Germanic mythology, and with the historical fact of the twelfth-century migration of Saxons to Siebenbürgen. *Tannhäuser* is, of course, a ballad of the supernatural, with its use of the learned superstitions about the Sibyl's Paradise and its figure of Venus:

'Frau Venus, noble lady sweet,  
thou art a devil-woman.'

The bulk of the German corpus is formed of ballads of adventure, the greater part of these being love-songs. The remainder concern horrific crimes: parricide, infanticide, rape, incest, poisoning. Many of these latter may refer to events which really occurred, and indeed ballads generally offer that sort of assurance, even when they are fictitious; but the circumstances are forgotten now, and the appeal of the ballad is to the morbid-minded. Some of the crimes belong to cycles of fiction. The guiltless prisoner is a figure which the German singers have especially delighted to honour. The whole group of adventure-ballads is dateless, and some may be ancient. The general tone, however, is somewhat vulgar, especially in the criminal pieces, and the favourite 'mise-en-scène' the tavern. It corresponds to the decline of taste in the later sixteenth century, when the 'reiter' took the place of the 'ritter', the swashbuckler of the knight. It is work of this quality which has overflowed into the neighbouring lands, whose balladries rarely recall the purely medieval aspects of the Volkslied.

When love is the theme there is no absolute distinction between song and ballad. The theme is immemorial. Already in the twelfth century we have good work done, as in the untranslatably simple *Thou art mine, I am thine*.<sup>1</sup> Its simple metaphor—the heart that is a coffer safely locked and the key thrown away—is heard in

<sup>1</sup> Dù bist mîn, ih bin dîn:  
des soltu gewis sîn.  
Dù bist beslozen  
in mînem herzen:  
verloren ist daz slûzzelîn:  
dû muost immer drinne sîn.

quatrains that live to-day in Switzerland, Alsace, Carinthia, and the Tyrol. In such pieces we have the originals of *Heidenröslein* and so many other of Germany's best artistic lyrics; we find also the secret of Goethe and Heine's music. A naïve felicity breathes in such lines as (being translated):

Shine on us, lovely sunshine,  
give us your brightest ray,  
shine on two loves together  
who fain would meet to-day.

The songs of parting lovers are full of such felicities; desertion and death fill folk-poetry with an emotion both tender and deep.

I heard a sickle rustling,  
a-rustling through the corn,  
I heard a maiden crying,  
of her true love forlorn.

‘So let it rustle, loveling,  
I care not how it go:  
new mistress here I’ve won me  
in this green sod below.’

‘Hast thou a mistress won thee  
in that green sod below,  
then stand I here so lonely,  
my heart is full of woe.’

This tenderness, sometimes degenerating into sentimentality, is universal in these expressions of the joy of true love, of longing, of wooing and winning, of opposition, separation, loss, and the ecstasy of reunion. The German minstrel sees these chapters in the immemorial romance simply. He has none of the austerity which breaks through in Spanish ballads; still less has he the light cynicism of the French. The French, unfortunately for their poetry, have not chosen to give due representation in their verses to the claims of simple emotion. The popular singers of the Middle Ages inherited a tradition from the troubadours, which turned love into an intrigue irrelevant to marriage. The result is a great deal of amusing and witty verse; one touches delicately, carelessly, upon illicit love, furtive meetings, ludicrous contretemps, and the cuckolding of husbands. There is a good deal of this in the corpus of German ballads also, and it is easy to recognize the foreign

leaven. A heavy debt for entertainment has been contracted by Germans in France. But the truly German manner is different. It is simpler, more immediate; the sentiments are fewer but deeper, and the lines are warmed by human kindness. Neither is adultery a model nor are husbands ridiculous; on the contrary, faithlessness leads to sorrow, tragedy, and crime. Thus the German ballads form a spectrum extending from the rosy idylls of the one extreme to the blood-stained sordidness of the other.

*The Ransom* (Erk-Böhme 78) is a simple history, which is found in Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Sweden, the Faeroes, Lusatia, Esthonia, and Finland. The German version is geographically central, whether it be original or not. A young girl, captured by a pirate, appeals to father, mother, sister, and brother, but only her true-love is willing to pay the price for her. Her peril is not always the same: in the Ukraine and Bulgaria she is represented as swimming for her life in the Danube or another river. In the Rumanian *Girl and Cuckoo*, she has lost her way; the cuckoo will save her, not to become her honorary cousin or brother, but only to be her lover. *The ransomed Slave* (Erk-Böhme 79) is quite modern. It is a tale of love at first sight. There is something pathetic and childish about the Swiss *Dursli and Babeli* (Erk-Böhme 80), though Dursli is old enough to join a regiment. It is thus a soldiers' poem, despite its appealing simplicity. The landsknecht was glad to represent himself as true in love, and so much to be preferred to the rich townsman. That is the moral of *Two Companions* (Erk-Böhme 70). It was a theme easily parodied 'a lo divino', and such parodies exist from the fifteenth century.

A number of ballads are no more than tableaux (Erk-Böhme 71-5). There is a girl and a clerk or ensign or shipman or soldier, and that is all. Usually maidens are not unduly coy, though there was one *Incorruptible* (Erk-Böhme 74); and consequently there are many ballads of maidens betrayed (Erk-Böhme 112-35). They make haste to elope with tipplers who pawn their clothes, or with landsknechts, ferrymen, officers, fiddlers. These songs are often connected with some particular rustic ploy, such as cutting grass or corn.

When the history is of bride-stealing or elopement, there is often a more pronounced narrative element. There was *The Lady of Kerenstein* (Erk-Böhme 34), for instance. She ran away to her lover, with the connivance of the watchman; her father

consoled himself with the thought that it was by her own consent and  
     the watchman on the ramparts  
     sang clear the dawning-song—

which must have been an unexpected sign of hilarity, since he had just been condemned to die. The conventions of the 'aubade' pervade such pieces. *Song's Reward* (Erk-Böhme 35), a Dutch piece from the fifteenth century, even goes so far as to use a 'senhal', in agreement with Provençal traditions:

I see the 'Star of Morning',  
     my love's clear countenance.

The lady did not consent in the tragic *Palatine or the bloody Marriage* (Erk-Böhme 39). The Palatine killed her relatives one by one and carried her off; he agreed not to molest her on the first night, and she was dead of sorrow by the next morning. A certain princess Margaret committed the imprudence of eloping with proud Henry (or Syburg), thinking him a rich man (Erk-Böhme 40). When she learned that he was poor

What took she from the scabbard?  
     A golden sword so red;  
     and down she kneeled before him,  
     and struck, and fell down dead.  
     'So if my father ask thee  
     why I have stayed behind,  
     then tell him I have perished  
     in a far foreign land.'

*The false Bride* (Erk-Böhme 211) is a commonplace and meagre treatment of the theme of the Scottish *Daemon Lover*.

The 'aubades' dealt conventionally with the partings of lovers, and so are akin to the more popular parting songs (Abschiedslieder), which occupy a large portion of the corpus. They have necessarily some narrative elements, at least a note of place and indication of the persons. More fully expanded, the parting song leads on to the happy or unhappy return, and so to complete histories like *The noble Moringer*. A simple and delightful version of this history is contained in *Unter der Linde* (Erk-Böhme 67):

A linden stands in a deep vale,  
     above 'tis broad and under small.  
     Beneath, a loving pair is set,  
     rejoicing all their griefs forget.

'Now, dearest love, we two must sunder,  
for seven years have I to wander.'

He, of course, overstays his leave, and returns with a tale of his own fickleness. As the lady does nothing but wish him well, he at last reveals himself as her true-love. These tests give the ballad its alternative title (*Liebesprobe*), and, apart from the final declaration, we have here the matter of the old French *Belle Doctte*. The German ballad has, however, an elusive, wistful charm of its own, and its own power to expand into Poland and other lands. There are other typical returns (Erk-Böhme 49, 93, 112, 191, 201), according as the lady was dead or indifferent or remarried.

Then there are ballads of separation which have a more tragic cast. Several very fine German and Dutch pieces tell the history of the knight who was ambushed by his lady's friends, and how she found his body and broke her heart over it (Erk-Böhme 94-6, *Todtenamt*, &c.). Brunswick is given as the scene of the tragedy, which may have been an actual event. Parental opposition might go to any extreme. The most powerful was the mother's malison (Erk-Böhme 192-4: *Blaublümlein*, &c.). More novelesque is the sort of opposition seen in *The cruel Brother* (Erk-Böhme 186), known also in Denmark, and *The King of Milan* (Erk-Böhme 97). In both the lady has been imprudent, but that is no reason why her kin should murder her. In one ballad the King of Milan rescues her and all ends happily; in the other the King of England arrives too late. He kills the brother,

and took the baby in his arm:  
'No mother have we, God keep thee from harm!'

A kitchen-boy was the lover in another case, and one does not know who killed her murderer:

Now Kirstie was buried beneath the rose-tree,  
the young Margrave they broke upon the wheel.

For Kirstie all the bells were rung,  
the Margrave to the crows they flung.

Other deaths are accidental. *Count Frederick's Wife* (Erk-Böhme 107) was accidentally pierced by his sword; her relatives avenged her, but a sign from heaven justified the count. *The Miller's Daughter* (Erk-Böhme 108) was caught in the mill-wheel, and *The young Margravine* (Erk-Böhme 109) died in childbirth at

the age of twelve. *Three Roses* (Erk-Böhme 203, 204) is a deserted maiden's cry of sorrow, and in the Low Country *King's Daughter* (Erk-Böhme 99) poetical justice is rather heavily done by making the faithless seducer return to beg bread at his lady's door.

Cynical ballads of intrigue are quite numerous in the German corpus (Erk-Böhme 127-56). They are almost all known also in the Low Countries, and they betray a French inspiration, though they are rather picaresque than witty. James I knew a Scottish ballad of the *Man in the Hay* type (Erk-Böhme 150), and the minnesinger Gottfried von Neifen is responsible for another two (Erk-Böhme 130, 138). The ballads are sometimes made at the expense of certain classes of persons supposed to be especially amorous: millers and their wives, students, monks, and parsons (Erk-Böhme 137, 152-6). On the other hand, nuns in love are treated tenderly, whether fortunate or unhappy (Erk-Böhme 68, 69, 89, 90). The pieces have had a wide circulation, and in their lyrical form (Nonnenklagen) they are especially affecting; for them there were precedents in French. Few ballads also have such fine airy beginnings as

I stood upon a hill-top,  
I looked in a deep mere,  
I saw a skiff a-swimming,  
three young earls in it were.

The device of pretended death, used of a nun in a Swedish ballad, is used in *Pretended Death as Match-maker* (Erk-Böhme 111); for which there was a French precedent in the old *Belle Isabiaus*. Stories of resurrected wives and fiancées (*Richmode von Adocht*) may have had a foundation in fact, like the Spanish *Doña Angela*.

*The Lady of Weissenburg* (Erk-Böhme 102-3) is one of the most fully developed of the ballads of passionate crimes. The event was historical and recorded in chronicles. In 1065 Friedrich of Saxony was murdered by the Landgrave of Thuringia for the sake of the fair Adelheid, his wife. The ballads date probably from the fifteenth century. They are hostile to the lady, whom they accuse of laying the plot for her husband's murder; in some versions she seeks to reward the slayer, but he remorsefully throws away her ring, in others he confesses and dies, and in others he dies returning to her the thirty ducats of the betrayal. The ballad-mongers of the Low Countries connect the event with the duchy of Luxemburg. *Hans Steutlinger*, recorded in print in 1544, is a history

modified by reminiscences of the older ballad. Other sanguinary adventures are recorded in *Mutschelbeck* and *Knight and Squire* (Erk-Böhme 104, 105), the former possibly historical, the other a rather pointless fiction. The most famous of adulterous criminals was Rosamunda, but the version given by Erk and Böhme (106) is a modern rendering from the Venetian of *Donna Lombarda*. The poisoner-motif was associated not with intrigue but with family hatred in the famous *Schlangenköchin* (Erk-Böhme 190), which is a form of the *Donna Lombarda* tradition. The evil-doer is a step-mother, aunt, grandmother, or, in one version, a lover. In *Degener and Lussewine* (Erk-Böhme 46) we have a black tale of revenge. Lussewine lures Degener into a bedroom so that her brothers may kill him for his murder of their father. *The Infanticide* (Erk-Böhme 56), imitated by both Bürger and Schiller, *The Raven-Mother* (Erk-Böhme 212), *The Wise Woman* (Erk-Böhme 213), and *The hateful Deed* (Erk-Böhme 66) are crimes that involve the perversion of the best instincts recognized by the ballads, namely, a mother's love for her child and brother's for brother. A miscellany of crimes (Erk-Böhme 48-54) includes murders for jealousy, and others, like the *Sold Miller's Wife* (Erk-Böhme 58), were attended by special circumstances of horror. The criminal in this case was broken on the wheel in 1596.

Tyrannous crimes are recorded in *The Lord of Brunswick* (Erk-Böhme 64, 188b), which is concerned with the game-laws, and in *The unmerciful Sister* and *The unmerciful Youth* (Erk-Böhme 209, 210). In the former a rich woman refuses her poor sister a loaf, but at last gives her one with a stone baked into it; in the latter the refusal of bread drives a poor widow to kill her children and herself. The rapes and robberies committed by landsknechts are also tyrannous crimes and give rise to many ballads; and there are some of a vulgarly doctrinal sort which trace malefactions to bad companions and bad upbringing.

Ballads concerning guiltless captives form a sort of cycle by themselves. The best is *The Castle in Austria* (Erk-Böhme 61), not for its contents, which are vaguely pathetic, but for its striking first verse:

There lies a castle in Austria,  
so well and truly founded,  
with silver and the red, red gold  
and marble walls surrounded.

But that verse seems to have been a second thought. The verse makes the ballad easily recognizable in Denmark and Sweden; and as the 'East-realm' might be Austria or the East from which our religion comes, this ballad was promptly adapted to religious ends. *Peter Unverdorben* (Erk-Böhme 60) is, perhaps, too explicit to leave the same impression on the mind; and even *The Lord of Falkenstein* (Erk-Böhme 62), though a noble tableau of wifely importunity and devotion, is not equal to *The Castle in Austria*. *The Knight and Shepherd* (Erk-Böhme 43) is fiction. Seized by a robber baron, the shepherd is set free in return for his parents' gold, his daughter's snood, or his acceptance of the baron's daughter in marriage.

A particularly delightful group is composed of ballads dealing with birds, beasts, and trees. Some are simple allegories, others are not so much parodies as etherealizations of human activities. Such are the animal marriages (Erk-Böhme 163-5: *Vogelhochzeit*, *Käferhochzeit*, *Tierhochzeit*), and the amusing *Hare's Complaint* and *Song of two Hares* (Erk-Böhme 167-70). An amusing skit is *The Swabian Round Table* (Erk-Böhme 142), in which the heroes gather to attack a hare, but are routed by a frog. It is based on a mastersong of the sixteenth century. There are naïve allegories and parables in *The Squirrel and his Wife*, *The Owl and Eagle*, *The Girl and the Hazel*, and *The Fir* (Erk-Böhme 172-6). The latter has given a lyric of exceptional beauty.

In the above catalogue I have not attempted to discriminate between Low and High German work or to give special treatment to ballads which may have originated in Holland and Flanders. It was hardly practicable to do so. As the songs from these regions were incorporated by Erk and Böhme in the *Deutscher Liederhort* at appropriate places, it seemed better to mention them as they occurred. Yet one must not conclude that the indebtedness was all on one side or that Dutch balladry lacks its independent life. Such famous pieces as *Hallewijn* and *The two King's Children* probably originated in the Netherlands, and the same may have been the case with others. The repute of Dutch folk-poets may have been unduly depressed in England by a remark of the late W. P. Ker's. As an example of the art of sinking in balladry he picked on the lines

And then she lit three candles,  
three candles at twelve to the pound.



That is better thrift than poetry, and there is a good deal of it. But there is also much bathos in English balladry, as Matthew Arnold knew too well. As against these we must place many ballads fairly conducted in Dutch, and some fine beginnings like

The day it springs from eastward,  
it lightens over all,

and possibly, though with a German hint, the spendthrift hyperbole:

If every mountain was of gold  
and all the waters wine,  
yet far more full of joy I'd be,  
fair maiden, wert thou mine.

Dutch ballads sometimes represent traditions which have been submerged in Germany as High German has overflowed the Low German area. Those of Flanders contain original traditions, as in *Genoveva* (Erk-Böhme 82) and *Roland and Godelinde*. They also show French influence more clearly than in Germany. The French 'vivandière' type of ballad appears to be well represented in *The Captain's Daughter* (Hoffmann von Fallersleben 41). It has the right amoral touch. The girl wants to join his company, but he will not allow her. She disguises herself, and when he proceeds to make love to her she is able to threaten him with pains and penalties at home; and so she joins the troop:

'O maiden, pretty maiden,  
an you with me will go,  
then all the clothes you carry  
with thread of silk I'll sew.'

'O captain, great commander,  
such thing can never be!  
Bethink you of your wedded wife,  
how angry she would be.'

'Now would indeed my wife at home  
here at my feet lay dead,  
and you and I, my pretty maid,  
were plucking roses red!'

And then he gave her wine to drink,  
cool wine out of a glass,  
'twas then he first began to think  
his daughter that she was!

The Low Countries have, naturally, their own tradition in historical balladry, though they have given easy acceptance to those of German origin. That the Flemish series is older than the German we have already seen to be probable. The oldest-known subject of a Dutch folk-song is the murder of Count Floris V by Gerhard van Velsen in 1296 (Hoffmann von Fallersleben 3). At the beginning of the thirteenth century the civic disturbances in Flanders produced some popular political verse scarcely distinguishable from balladry, and in the fifteenth century *Thijsken van den Schilde* and *Claus Molinaer* (Hoffmann von Fallersleben 23, Erk-Böhme 249, 250) were robber barons whom the Dutch, unlike the Germans, were unwilling to idealize. Holland had her own songs of the Reformation, and her national anthem:

Willelmus van Nassouwe  
am I, of German blood,  
to the fatherland I am faithful  
and true until I am dead.  
A Prince of Orange, I,  
so free and unafraid,  
the great King of Hispania  
at all times I revered.

Nothing could more clearly indicate the conflicting loyalties of the Dutch Revolt. The tune was more popular than the words, and was a frequently used model for German songs.

### 5. *Czechoslovakia, Hungary*

Many lines of evidence point to the modernity of the ballads now sung in Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia. They contain no reminiscences of the old historic legends of the Czech people: Přemysl the ploughman-king and the wise Libuša, the clever horse Šermík, or Bruncvík, to whom were attributed all the adventures of Henry the Lion. An *Alexandreis* existed in the language in the thirteenth century, yet neither this popular literary tradition nor any other has been turned to ballad uses. The religious disturbances which convulsed the region from the advent of John Hus to the fall of the Winter King are recorded in no ballad, though there exists a Hussite hymn which was undoubtedly popular. The allusions of soldiers' songs take us back to the period of the French Revolution and the Seven Years' War, but not earlier. In topics and style they are typical conscripts' songs, exactly like

those of the Austrian and Hungarian contingents which made up the Imperial armies. Lyrical poems vastly outnumber the narrative verses; the actors are humble, and the action tends to take place in inns or other plebeian surroundings. Though landsknechts and reiters are not mentioned, much space is given to stories of crime. Taken as a whole, the Czechoslovak corpus resembles the later German balladry as it had become after the middle of the seventeenth century. It is from Germany that the more interesting subjects derive, together with the technique and some of the music.<sup>1</sup>

German ballads or ballads which have crossed Germany give rise to over a score of those current in Moravia. The saga of Hero and Leander appears in two forms (185, 187), and, owing to its lyrical degeneration, it is hard to mark off from other drowning ballads, which may be its derivatives or be based on actual events (90, 129). The Danube takes the place of the Hellespont, and serves as well. The Samaritan woman is identified with the Magdalene (*The Sinner* 3) in a ballad which, though crude, is impressive in its ruthlessness. *The Murderer* (189) is an offshoot of *Hallewijn*; it belongs to the group in which the girl is actually killed, and later avenged by her three brothers. All Czech ballads of supernatural adventure owe either their origin or their transmission to Germany: they include *The Shroud* and—a variant—*The Dead Man* (110, 160), *The Orphan at her Mother's Grave* (159), *The Girl at her Lover's Grave and at her Mother's Grave* (86, 102), *The enchanted Daughter* (146) who has been metamorphosed by a curse into a tree, and another *Dead Man* (112), Janoško, who is Sweet William to Kačenka's Lenore. *The Shroud* is more gloomily suggestive in Czech than in the surviving German versions of *Der Vorwirth*, and some of the other pieces are not unworthily rendered. *The luckless Wedding* (89) seems to be a rationalized version of *Elveskud*. Herman is the hero. He goes for his bride, but robbers set on him and kill him; his bride is brought home in ignorance of his death, but she hears bells tolling and kills herself on his bier. Under the same number Sušil included a ballad con-substantial with the German *Count Frederick*, in which a bride is accidentally killed by her husband's sword. The soldier's return is

<sup>1</sup> F. Sušil, *Moravské národní Písň*, Brno, 1868-74. Some idea of the older Czech literature may be obtained from W. Szegeida, *Tschechoslowakische Anthologie von den Heldensagen bis zur Gegenwart*. Numbers in the text correspond to Sušil's numeration.

a theme occurring in two versions: *The Homecomer* (144) includes his return and the tests he sets his fiancée, and *First Love* (135) contains the more circumstantial Moringer legend. The poisoner theme of *Schlangenköchin* is variously rendered as the *Poisoner Mother* (157), who kills her son in error for his bride, but is successful in another ballad (92), and *The Poisoner Fiancée* (166), which stands nearer to the archetype of *Donna Lombarda*. *The Infanticide* (158) is also of German origin, and *The long-lost Sister* (175) is a tavern variant of the *Kudrún* story.

Suggestions have come from other sides also. The appearance of the legend of Lear and his three daughters (119) is remarkable. Sušil gives two versions of the ballad, which is entirely traditional and bears no indication as to its source. One cannot feel sure that French folk-song has influenced the Czechs apart from what has been mediated by Germans. *The Biter bit* (108) is an intrigue conducted with the light touch usually characteristic of France. *The Amazon* (109) is a ballad which probably began its career in France, spreading outwards from thence to Spain on the one hand and to Northern Italy on the other. The Czech version is of a western character and unlike those which circulate in Yugoslavia, Greece, and Rumania; it stands between the western ballads and the somewhat modified Ukrainian legend. One may suppose that it travelled northward from the Italian possessions of the old Empire. In one version the Kaiser of this ballad is called John, but in others he is anonymous; the enemies fought by the Amazon are Turks, so that the importation of the ballad may have taken place at any time during the Turkish threats to Vienna (1532-1643). In contrast with the paucity of Romance influences, there is the presence of unmistakable Serbian motifs in Czech balladry. *The Turkish Wooer* (128) is the old French ballad of the girl who feigned death to avoid dishonour, but dressed in the Serbian manner, and *Affianced to a Turk* (147) is wholly Serbian. *Maruška and Janóšek* (107) is akin to the ballads in which a girl is made to sing and her voice brings robbers to attack her escort; the story is told in Yugoslavia of Marko Kraljević and other heroes. There is also *The Poisoner Sister* (168), Ulianka, who gives her brother a stone for a couch and a snake for fish. The transference of such themes was probably direct, since in the Austrian armies Czech and Croat regiments must have mingled, and their languages stand closer to each other than to German or Magyar.

A similar account should, no doubt, be given of Hungarian balladry.<sup>1</sup> Its originality is probably more musical than narrative. The Magyars have stubbornly adhered to their language which, being non-Aryan, cuts them off from communication with all other Europeans. What they create in this language is their own peculiar treasure, and remains veiled before the curiosity of western scholars. They cannot easily lend, but they can borrow through the languages (especially German) which their isolated position compels them to learn. Hungarians are of necessity bilingual or polyglot, and they acquire for themselves the advantages possessed by their neighbours. Their ballads thus are part of a continuous pattern with those of Czechoslovakia and Austria, though I have encountered no instance of borrowing from the former. They are of late German type in both technique and topics, but they show also some novel aspects. The life of the Puszta, with its cowboys and cattle raids, is unlike that of any other part of Europe, and it is celebrated in songs, chiefly of a lyric kind. A strong air of freedom blows through them. They are defiant of poverty and of restraint:

I am an orphan unafraid,  
I get along with what I'm paid,  
my herds are work done by my hands,  
my two hands serve all my commands,  
and the wide plain's my home.

Love lyrics occupy the greater portion of the Hungarian collections. They are often sprightly, and touched with imagination. Humour and satire, drinking and dancing songs show equal verve. At the other extreme there are some notable religious songs, such as *The Magyar Galley-Slaves' Song*, which dates from the persecution of Protestantism by the Hapsburgs in the seventeenth century. The religious reform produced one of many situations in which Hungarians opposed Austrians. *Rákóczi's March* celebrates a more purely political occasion in the eighteenth century, though its music dates only, as it would seem, from 1809. Soldiers' songs are numerous, and are those of the conscript type. The situations may be universal, but the settings are modern, such as the watch on the frontier in 1866 and the attack on Bosnia in 1878. The emperor Francis Joseph is mentioned not without affection; though emotions of distaste and repugnance are usually evident in references to the necessity and conditions of military service.

<sup>1</sup> See Note J, p. 389.

A general description of the Magyar repertoire by J. H. Schwicker brings out clearly its links with Germany and the rest of Europe:

In more recent times (he wrote) popular ballads and romances have dealt principally with social conditions, events and types of daily life. They are chiefly erotic narratives, and, with few exceptions, are of a tragic nature. There is the youth who murders his fiancée out of jealousy; the murdered boy who cannot be aroused by his father and mother, but only by his true-love; the youth who dances to death his false love; the tricked maiden or bridegroom; the sultan's daughter who frees two Hungarian knights from prison and flees with them; the test for wives, when a prince despises the rich and takes to wife the poor maiden; the bride who contrives her husband's death; the faithless wife who fondles another man as her husband lies a-dying; the man who surprises his wife and her paramour, and kills both; the complaint of a girl forcibly betrothed to a robber; the false wife who yet cannot desert her children; the mother who surrenders her treasures for her children; the daughter who leaves her mother to languish in prison; the mother who kills her son's fiancée and so drives him to kill himself; the master-builder who builds his wife into the foundation of his walls to secure their stability.

With some additions and subtractions, this paragraph might almost serve as a description of Czech balladry also. It is not that the catalogue is quite unoriginal. There are many ballads on the power of love, contrasting the lover with the more tepid affection of parents and friends; but one does not encounter elsewhere the test that love should bring the dead to life, which is prescribed in *The dead Boy*. *Kádár Kata*, the most-quoted of Hungarian ballads, is a simple-minded story of true love and parental opposition, the reported death of the lady and despair of the lover, and two graves which give soil to intertwining 'chapel-flowers'. The lines are ragged, but the ingenuous history is carried to a swift conclusion by life-like dialogues. *Fair Lilia* is an offshoot of the French *King Louis's Daughter*, and *Kerekes András* is the soldier who returns, like so many, to find his fiancée married to another man. The music, with its use of ecclesiastical tones as well as Gypsy rhythm, shows the ballad to be old in Hungary. The derivative of *The Two King's Children* (*Gacsaj Pesta szép fiú vaut*) is highly lyrical, and its pentatonic structure is also a guarantee of age. *Susanna of Homlód* is the Magyar representative of the *Schlangenköchin*, and *Molnár Anna* is the heroine of a *Hallewijn*

ballad. The North German and Danish ballad of the *Merman* is represented by the Magyar *Palbeli Antal*. *Clement the Mason's Wife* is of interest because it is due in the first place to the Rumanians who formed the basic population of Hungarian Transylvania. Obtained by them from their kinsmen the Wallachian Rumanians (who call the legend *Master Manole*), it is a ballad which started its wanderings from an original home among the Greeks of central Asia Minor.

Greek and Balkan elements mingle with German in the songs of the Hungarian gypsies.<sup>1</sup> Their songs are mostly lyrical, but they have some narratives, including some that may be considered their own, either as composed by gypsies or as appropriated to the gypsy life. A girl is advised to prefer a fiddler to any other suitor; death meets a gypsy woman; and Black Vodas murders his wife. In other pieces the themes are the roving life and irresponsibility in love. They are of no high merit. The ballad technique at its best is simple but delicate, and is not readily gained by a roving horde. Roving leads rather to the picking up of unconsidered trifles. Wlislöcki's collection shows many such borrowings. The battle of father with son is told in *Father and Son* (13) rather in the Greek manner of *Tsamados* than in the German of *Hildebrand*, and *Anrus and Death* (1) is certainly the Greek ballad from the Akritic cycle. In *Hasten, hasten, Mother* (6) the test to which parents and lover are put is the Serbian test, namely, to snatch a viper from one's bosom. On the other hand, the ballads of German origin are more numerous, for we are still within the sphere of German influence. There is the inevitable *Schlangenköchin* (2), the *Lenore* motif (3), *The hungry Child* (11), *The Maid and the Forest* (12, the German *Tannenbaum*), the *Captured Lady* (17), who must be ransomed and only a lover will do so. There is, of course, no trace of literary or historical tradition in gypsy balladry. Their tunes, or rather their manner of playing tunes, have left a deep mark on Hungarian songs.

#### 6. *Lusatia, Poland*

The districts of Upper and Lower Lausitz or Lusatia extend from within the eastern border of the Saxon kingdom northward

<sup>1</sup> H. von Wlislöcki, *Volksdichtungen der siebenbürgischen und südungarischen Zigeuner*, Vienna, 1890. He gives translations only in this volume. In his *Haideblüten*, Leipzig, 1880, there are texts and translations; but they are merely epigrams.

for a distance of about 50 miles in the valley of the Spree. The inhabitants, numbering about 200,000, are of Slavonic stock and speech. They call themselves Lusatians or Sorbs (Serske, Sarske), but to the Germans they are known as Wends—the old name applied to any representatives of the Slavonic stock. Their ballads have been collected by Leopold Haupt and Johann Ernst Schmalers,<sup>1</sup> and are of special interest for two reasons. Firstly, the collection is, in a peculiar sense, definitive. Apart from an abortive literary movement in the nineteenth century, there has been no other expression of Lusatian creative genius. The ballads are their all. The collectors gathered texts from the whole district, together with the surviving melodies; and they have added an illuminating introduction and full notes. Secondly, the people are a Slavonic islet wholly subjected to German hegemony. At least fifty of their ballads are palpably German, and there is a marked German strain in their melodies. Though enclosed within Germany, they are not out of touch with their Slavonic kinsmen. For a period Saxony and Poland formed one kingdom. The 'king' of their ballads is usually the Polish king. Lusatia thus forms a bridge between German balladry and that of Poland, Galicia, and the Ukraine. It shows correspondences also with Czechoslovakia, into which similar German influences poured, though probably from another direction.

In the opinion of the collectors, Lusatian tunes stand on a footing of equality with the best in Germany, and by their use of ecclesiastical modes, they give evidence of respectable antiquity. They held that specifically German traits are late. 'The greater number (they wrote) have the characteristics of Slavic folk-song; but some, which resemble German types of song more closely, betray their later origin.' It is possible the collectors may have begged the question of date. They wrote at a time when music and song were considered innate endowments of all men, so that a Slavonic folk would be supposed first to sing Slavonic tunes. The point seems to lie open to debate, since tunes collected only in the nineteenth century cannot but be of undetermined age. Save in dance-tunes, the enunciation is leisurely, and there is much use of tremolo and trill. Verses frequently begin, as in Polish Galicia and the Ukraine, with an exclamation (ha or hal'e), and this ejaculation may be used to

<sup>1</sup> L. Haupt and J. E. Schmalers, *Volkslieder der Wenden in der Ober- und Nieder-Lausitz*, Grimma, 1841-3.



replace a missing syllable. The music shows that the lines are to be considered syllabically regular, despite the minstrel's occasional failure to keep the count. It covers two, three, or four lines, but most often three. The texts, however, as in Czechoslovakia, are usually couplets in this case, and the third line is obtained by repeating one of the others, though it occasionally appears to round out the sense of the stanza. Couplets are also the texts for several pieces of quatrain music. There are lyrical cries, usually formed of unintelligible syllables, and repetitions of words, as in German, but no proper refrains, as in Scotland and Scandinavia. Repeated lines naturally rhyme with themselves, and the treatment of the odd line is wont to be arbitrary. Assonance is the principle of construction, and is obtained from the simplest grammatical devices (diminutive suffixes, flexions of verbs, &c.); but it is so often absent that it is evident the principle was not held in high esteem.

The Lusatian ballads have often the dignity and discretion which is attached to genuine medieval balladry. Evidence that they reach back to a good epoch is afforded by *Handrias and Rajszenberk* (i. 14), which belongs to the ballads of robber barons. This anti-hero was Christoph von Ressenberg, a belated practitioner of the gentle trade, who was associated with Siegmund von Kauffung, a rogue beheaded in 1534. The sixteenth century is indicated also by a piece of more doubtful reference, *The poisoned Lord* (i. 57). The lord is said to have been a king of Hungary, and he may be the ill-fated Ludwig who perished at Mohacs in 1526. According to the ballad the young lord drank poison in a cup offered him by a Turkish woman, but his queen saw his soul go up to the bliss of heaven. *The evil Robbers* (i. 2) are said to have been Tatars; in Polish Galicia they are termed Tatars, and this may be due to the fact that the Tatars have remained in the Ukraine until modern times. In the Czech equivalent ballad they are said to have been Turks. The name, therefore, is not necessarily proof of high antiquity. In view of these identifications, it would appear hazardous to follow the collectors of these ballads in their interpretation of two others: *Komm 'runter, mein Gretchen* and *The Sorbs' Victories* (i. 31, 4). They take these up to the remote tenth century, to the epoch of the German wars with the Wends; but the first piece, with its German refrain, describes a Lusatian girl's choice between three German pretenders, and the second celebrates three victories over the Germans—themes which are equally interesting

if merely fictitious. We cannot carry Lusatian ballads to a remote date; but the sixteenth-century pieces are well enough marked for us to consider the fifteenth as a probable starting-point. In any case, Lusatian balladry contains examples of older styles than are to be found in the neighbouring countries encircling Germany.

German counterparts can be found for about fifty of the pieces reproduced by Haupt and Schmalzer. These include the counterparts of the *Kudrún* and *Wolfdietrich* ballads (i. 5, 82) in good states of preservation, of the *Leander* (*Two King's Children*, i. 52, ii. 1) piece, and of the mastersong ballad of *The Count of Rome* (i. 21). The supernatural ballads include *Hilžička* (i. 1), which corresponds to the German *Rübezahl*, with elements of the *Hallewijn* cycle, *The Merman* (i. 34), *The Shroud* (i. 58), *The Orphan at her Mother's Grave* (i. 132). There are several derivatives of *Unter der Linde* (i. 15, 43, 47, 82, 134; ii. 15), and of the ever-popular *Schlangenköchin* (i. 77, 147). The minor German ballads are also represented, such as *The Grass Girl*, *The Beggar from Hungary*, *The grim Brother*, *The Nobleman in the Sack*, and the highly typical pieces in which natural allegories are used: *The Girl and the Hazel*, *The Owl and the Eagle*. It is of interest to note that the Lusatian ballads, though Slavonic, differ from those of Moravia in showing no traces of Yugoslav traditions; nor is there any trace of the free verse of Russia or Bulgaria. With their nearer neighbours, however, the Sorbs maintain closer relations, so that the verbal resemblances between their versions and those of the Czechs and Poles are notable. One may see this in *The Orphan at the Mother's Grave* and *The Shroud*. In *Kitty of Niedergurig* (i. 11), the heroine has a German name, but the Don Juan who attempts to dishonour her is called *Wuherjowski panik* 'Lord of Unworth', an evident pun on *Wuherski pan* 'Lord of Hungary', which echoes the Czech distrust of Hungarians. There are also some pieces of strictly Slavonic origin, such as *The evil Robbers*, already mentioned, and *Animal Life* (i. 85).

More texts seem to have been borrowed than tunes. Several Lusatian ballads are grouped under one tune, whereas German ballads frequently have several tunes. The narrative detail was rendered more precise, or perhaps retained the medieval precision it may have lost in the land of origin. The objective, unlyrical manner of the Lusatian ballads corresponds to older and better models than those now available for several German pieces, or is a reaction in favour of the older manner.

These proofs of indebtedness should not blind us to the original merits of the Sorb ballads. They are divided into significant classes, which correspond with the round of peasant occupations. So there are songs for the fields (*pšezpólna*), apophthegms and saws (*rónčka*), dances (*reje*), improvised rounds (*wuženjenja*), marriage ditties (*kwasne spjewy*) and songs for begging (*stonanje*), as well as religious legends (*podkurlušje*). The apophthegms give maidens a chance to show their wit before the dancing starts; the rounds enliven proceedings with personal allusions; one begs a morsel when any one kills a pig or bakes a loaf. The field-songs are sung when passing along the fields from the townships to the country, and their length is as the length of the road. There are no historical cycles of ballads in a district which has had no independent history, and no direct literary reminiscences. There are religious ballads on Jacob and Rachel, Joseph's chastity, the Samaritan Magdalene, St. George, St. Nicholas, and various moral tales, generally such as occur also elsewhere. The bulk of the collection consists of love-songs which cover the usual classes: wooing and winning, seduction and remorse, the vigilance of chaperons and warnings to girls, trickery, tests of affection, separation and reunion, desertion, opposition, tragic accidents, death, and passionate crime. There is comparatively little of the goliardic and anticlerical satire of the Low Countries and Rhine provinces, nor is there a Newgate Calendar of vulgar crimes. Criminal ballads are a well-known symptom of decadence, and their absence is a sign that the Sorbs have retained in their songs their pristine innocence.

Lying farther to the East, Poland is a land rich in folk-songs, but poor in true ballads. The ballads, indeed, seem to be not so much Polish as Galician, that is, they belong to the same Ruthenian-speaking people as cultivate narrative oral poetry in the Ukraine, and their evidence is used in forming Ukrainian anthologies also.<sup>1</sup> Representatives of German ballad cycles appear in Polish in highly lyrical forms. The lyrics, on the other hand, flourish vigorously; 'they accompany our folk from the cradle to the grave'. They are adapted to the main family events, such as betrothals, marriages, christenings, and burials; they celebrate the red-letter days of the calendar, as Easter, Midsummer's Day, and Christmas Eve (*kolędy*) and their language is the utterance of farmers, herders, huntsmen,

<sup>1</sup> See Note K, p. 389.

miners, fishers, raftsmen, artisans, and soldiers. Fully half the repertoire consists of love-songs on the lips of women.

All these lyrics are danced as well as sung. 'A Polish song', said an eighteenth-century observer, 'makes the whole world dance.' Every genuine folk-song is a dance, and every dance a song. Lively music quickens the feet; the notes of the bagpipe, shawm, and fiddle are piercing and sprightly; and the rustic picture is completed by the swirling, colourful popular costumes. These are elements added by the Poles themselves to the technique of Germany, for their verses stand in close relationship to those of Germany, and not to the danced 'viser' of Scandinavia. They are generally quatrains or couplets, though more elaborate stanzas also occur. The lines are tolerably regular and are assonated or rhymed; but the assonances are so elusive and so simple that one might doubt whether they constitute a principle of Polish prosody. There is not much use of refrains, nor of triplets. The rhythms of the dance-songs, especially in Galicia, are those which characterize Ukrainian traditional verse, thanks to the powerful cultural influences which extended from Poland into Southern Russia from the sixteenth century. Conversely, there is no free verse to correspond to the indigenous 'dumi' of the Ukraine or to the Russian 'byliny'. The Polish folk-song, though Slavonic, belongs to the occidental tradition.

Turning to the 'men's songs' (męskie pieśni), which, according to Zaleski, 'describe events referring to the whole country or to particular individuals', it is disconcerting to find among them some which express frank dislike of the Poles. They are Ukrainian songs dating from the great Cossack revolt. There are others which do not concern Poland at all, but refer to Muscovite victories in Turkish lands. Their evidence is of doubtful value in an attempt to determine the age of Polish balladry, since so many of them are not Polish but Ruthenian. For what it is worth, the evidence points to a quite modern date. *Chotim* (Zaleski AA 3) refers to the defeat inflicted on the Turks in 1739 by the Russians. A swiftly moving ballad entitled *Cossack Nyczaj* (Zaleski AA 1) tells how he was surprised and captured by the Poles, then hanged and quartered. It should probably be associated with the revolt of 1651, though there is no compelling reason to prefer that date to another. The discomfiture of a certain *Drewicz* or *Derewicz* (Zaleski AA 2), who was led in chains to Cracow, is in the more

lyrical Polish manner, but *Kozubaj* (Zaleski AA 4) is again a history of one who fought against the Poles. Bows and arrows are mentioned as weapons, and the poem may go back as far as the sixteenth century. In short, the harvest of historical ballads is meagre, and their sympathies generally Ruthenian. The use of full rhyme, though irregularly maintained, is a most modern feature. A poem entitled *The Turk's Bride* (Zaleski BB 31, Walter, p. 41) is the same as the Ukrainian *Mother-in-law Prisoner to her Son-in-law* (Dragomanov 64). An old woman is captured and set to work by her captor's wife; she rocks the baby, crooning to it that she is its grandmother, and so a recognition takes place. Dr. Kamiński refers this tableau to the epoch of Turkish Wars with Poland, which raged from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries; but it is not certain that the piece is Polish in origin.

With the Ukraine are shared the ballads of *Roman and Olena* (Zaleski BB 7, Dragomanov 65), a modern sentimental ballad, *The dying Cossack's Farewell to his Horse* (Zaleski BB 8, Dragomanov 58), *The Falcon on the Poplar* or the lover pays the ransom (Zaleski BB 15, Dragomanov 34). *The Robber's Bride* (Walter, p. 52), is probably of Yugoslav origin; it is found also in the Ukraine and in Czechoslovakia. With this neighbouring country one has to compare *Marcisia* (Zaleski BB 9) or *The Infanticide* (Sušil 158), *The Falcon on the Poplar*, *The Murderess* (Zaleski 26, Sušil 98), and the inevitable Samaritan Magdalene (Walter, p. 85). These correspondences do not amount to the identity observable in the case of Ukrainian ballads. Resemblances between Polish and Lusatian songs are frequently noted by Haupt and Schmalzer. These instances are usually ballads which have a German origin, or at least Germanic analogues: *The Mermaid*, *The Soldier's Homecoming*, *The Test of Affection (Liebesprobe)*, *Leander*, *The Ravisher's Reparation*, *The Poisoner* (Walter, pp. 6, 15, 8, 17, 28, 32), together with some of the themes held in common between the Poles and the Czechs. Comparatively few of these have extended into the Ukraine. In comparative balladry, therefore, Polish Galicia is a frontier of the occidental style. Few of the themes, but more of the technique, have penetrated farther, into the Ukraine; and there has been a less conspicuous reflux from the Ukraine into Poland. In the centre and north of the country, however, the predominance of the lyric makes Polish popular verse a natural transition from the German to the Baltic manner.

Even in borrowed poems there is room for a certain originality. The Polish ballad of *Leander* contains no more than the final scene of *Two King's Children*, and shows the withdrawal of Leander's body from the waves. It is the most poignant moment of the pathetic history, and well suited to treatment as a song. Another ballad may be based on *Elveskud* (Walter, p. 15) or on another cycle. It begins:

There rides a rider with steel bedight,  
he rideth home from the awful fight.

His family receive him, as in the Danish ballad, and put him to bed; but then the story takes a new turn. He learns that his mother has died, and he dies of grief:

‘To thee, dear Son, what can I give,  
I that so long have ceased to live.  
Take a small room so dim and lone  
’twixt worm and root and the grey, grey stone.’  
‘Oh heaven, oh earth, oh heavenly grace!  
Oh dearest mother in grisly place!’  
The rider rides with death and night,  
comes no more home from the awful fight.

The rendering of *The Castle in Austria* (Walter, p. 11) has a similar light touch. In *Sir Sawa* (Zaleski BB 23) we find an effective history of what may have been an actual event. Sir Sawa returned home to find that his wife had given him a son; but no sooner had he descended to the cellar for wine to celebrate the event, than Cossacks attacked him and killed him unarmed. The tragic emotions are here, as elsewhere, those affected by the ballad-poets, as in the more vulgar *Lord Kaniowski*, *Jasia*, and *Nastyna* (Zaleski BB 13, 14, 2, 1).

#### 7. *Lithuania, Latvia*

One might say that the colour of Lithuanian ‘dainos’ is a translucent green. It is not merely that the colour is so often mentioned in the poems. It is rather that the language and manner have the qualities of early Spring; that there is something strangely delicate, pellucid, and yet vivacious in the songs of the Lithuanian peasants. They are songs rather than ballads. The predominance of the lyric which is notable in later German work, and augmented in Poland,

<sup>1</sup> See Note L, p. 389.

becomes absolute in crossing this further linguistic frontier. All Lithuanian work is lyrical. There remain, however, certain narrative suggestions, of a faint and elusive quality. The situation on which the emotion is founded is outlined in one or two strokes, like those of a Chinese painter of birds in flight. One learns something about place and circumstance, as one does also in the 'cos-santes' of Portugal. The emotional appeal is heightened by repetition. As in old Portugal and Galicia, so in Lithuania, the subtlest suggestions are made by means of parallel phrases and tableaux; but there is greater variety in the types of Lithuanian parallelism. These 'dainos' are so often exquisite, so normally happy, that they must be held to be the most perfect type of those ballads which have been described earlier as narrative lyrics. They lie at one extreme end of the ballad spectrum.

Lines are of various length, and without rhyme or assonance in principle. In practice it is hardly possible to avoid assonance, thanks to the incessant use of beautiful liquid diminutives, and to identical flexions in the verbs. Alliteration, also, is not a prosodic principle, but a constant occurrence. We have not to suppose that the singers are unaware of these features of their songs, but that, on the contrary, one of the principal sources of their pleasure is the gossamer of elusive echoes which floats about their poems. Lines are, however, grouped into stanzas of simple, but precise, structure. It is the function of the melodies to group the lines, but they cohere also in sense. The parallel construction of phrases and distribution of line-lengths produce stanzas which are readily recognized as such even in print. In short, this is a quality held in common with the whole Nordic group, and the absence of dance-refrains is a specific feature of the German sub-area. We have seen that the intermittent assonance of German balladry shows signs of failing altogether in Poland; Lithuania's 'dainos' are but one remove farther on the same road.

The music scans the lines. The ordinary prose accents of words are not obligatory in verse, and the latter can be 'read by the melody' (*ant balso skaityti*),<sup>1</sup> with an arbitrarily regularized

<sup>1</sup> Nesselmann quotes as an example:

<i>Normal</i>	<i>Melodic</i>	<i>Translation</i>
Ant tiltùžio stowėjau, su mergýte kalbėjau	Ant tiltùžio stówėjáu, sù mergýte kálbėjáu	I stood on a bridge, I spoke to a maid

The grave and acute accents represent minor and major stresses. (The dots over certain vowels and consonants are orthographic.)

enunciation. These musical phrases are built into distichs, triplets (usually with the last line long), quatrains (with or without refrain), and stanzas of seven or more lines. The recurrence of the same phrase or of its twin brother marks the divisions of the thought, and there is an ampler parallelism in many songs, which consists of placing together two complete tableaux to make a diptych. The listener is asked to notice the same situation in two aspects; the emotion is not elaborated, it is shared. So we find many ballads divided between, for instance, a youth and a maiden, as in the following case:

Early rising in the morning,  
to my garden-plot I wandered,  
and I gathered me green rue-plants  
and among the rue I bedded.

Then there came, there came a stripling,  
sought to waken me, the maiden:  
'Wake, oh waken, gentle maiden,  
much too humble is your chamber.'

'Let it grieve you not, my stripling,  
good enough for me my chamber,  
with the green rue for a mattress  
and my garland for my pillow.'

Early rising in the morning,  
to my horse's stall I wandered,  
combed and curried there my sorrel,  
and beside the horse I bedded.

Then there came, there came a maiden,  
sought to waken me, the stripling:  
'Wake, oh waken, gentle stripling,  
much too humble is your chamber.'

'Let it grieve you not, my maiden,  
good enough for me my chamber,  
with the green hay for a mattress,  
saffron saddle for my pillow.'

(Nesselmann 298.)

In Latvia the 'daina' becomes epigrammatic. The number of stanzas is reduced drastically in all cases, but the great majority of songs contain no more than one. If the Lithuanian poems correspond to the 'cossantes', the Latvian correspond to the modern Portuguese 'quadras'. Lines may be of various lengths, but there is a strong preference for the octosyllable. Stanzas may be of any



length, but the preference is markedly for the quatrain. In the absence of other verses, the stanzaic structure is no longer apparent, and the Latvian 'dainas' have the appearance of unrhymed, unstrophic, octosyllabic verse, with elements of assonance and alliteration corresponding to no fixed plan. Such a description would fit the folk-poetry of their neighbours, the Esthonians, though the 'laulud' of the latter are normally longer than a quatrain. Phrases of the Latvian 'dainas' are made to run parallel, and a similar parallelism of phrase in the longer folk-songs of Esthonia tends to form strophes of unequal length. Such divisions are optional, and not always present. They occur in the Finnish 'runot' also, which have the Esthonian characteristics, together with a more scrupulous use of alliteration, which becomes a principle of versification in Finland, though not reduced to a mathematical norm. Thus by a sequence of minor changes the technique of German folk-song can be placed at the end of a continuous band, of which the other extreme lies in Finland. That is, I have no doubt, what actually occurred; and the Latvian 'daina' is a form derived from the Lithuanian by compression. This does not imply necessarily Lithuanian priority, but only that the Lithuanian form is the older as now extant.

The unity of 'dainas' and 'dainos' is attested not only by the words, and by the close kinship of the two languages; but also by the use of the same mythology, the same domestic range, the same motifs and divisions, and even the same fables. *The Owl at the Sparrow's Wedding*, *The Orphan at her Mother's Grave*, *The stolen Sister* (Barons 2546, 3944, 13646), are pieces with Lithuanian parallels (Nesselmann 13, 67, 204). Correspondences of this sort are the more remarkable, since the Latvian quatrains are essentially improvisations. In a sense, they have no permanent existence; they can be called into being at any moment in accordance with an accepted formula of composition. Under such conditions there would be an inevitable loss of narrative particulars which were already elusive in the longer Lithuanian 'dainos'. On the other hand, the fact that the Latvian songs spring spontaneously on all occasions, and not only on such as are naturally fitted for poetic elaboration, causes them to follow much more intimately the joys, sorrows, and thoughts of the singers. Their documentary value is high; their aesthetic value is much lower than that of the Lithuanian songs.

Indebtedness to the West is evidenced by the first two of the pieces cited, and by several others. The class of animal histories is, as we have seen, peculiarly German. They are found again in Lusatia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland—lands subject to German influence. In both the Baltic states they are quite numerous and wholly charming. *The Sparrow's Wedding* recalls the German *Bird's Wedding*; *The Wedding of Bear and Wolf* (Nesselmann 14) is a satire like the Lusatian *Animal Life* (Haupt and Schmalzer, i. 83) and its Polish congeners. Eight of Nesselmann's 'dainos' tell the story of the girl who lost her ring in the water, and had it recovered by her lover (83-9, 95), which is the story of the international ballad *Cola Pesce*. The wooer who pretends to great wealth, but is detected in his lying, appears in one Lithuanian piece (Nesselmann 153), as well as in the Swedish *Seven golden Hills* (Bergström 64) and its German congeners. Mother, father, sister, and brother are asked to perform a dangerous service which only the lover will do (Nesselmann 125); a boy enlists, like the Swiss *Dursli*, to make money for his wedding (Nesselmann 124); a girl, like the French *Perronnelle*, goes off with the soldiers and will not come back (Nesselmann 204, 357); *Nutmegs and Pinks* (Nesselmann 187) reminds us of the same combination in a German song. In all these cases the simplification of details makes for the loss of that nexus of events which constitutes the identity of a ballad. The orphan's tragedy is simply her loneliness, and there are many poems which affirm no more. Rhessa's twenty-fourth ballad has been identified as a version of the widespread *Orphan at her Mother's Grave* (Leskien, *Lit. Les.* 7, Nesselmann 67); but nothing could be farther from the circumstantial narrative of Denmark than

I, poor house-drudge,  
 I, poor orphan,  
 to drudge am bounden  
 the weary daytime.  
 How I long for  
 my mother only,  
 my intercessor!  
     Long she's tarried  
 in high hillock;  
 o'er her barrow  
 rue drips dew-drops  
 glittering brightly  
 like pure silver.

In a ballad of bride-stealing we are told that she has become a Tatar (Nesselmann 204); the detail is the more to be treasured because it is so rare; though one hardly knows whether to infer that the song is ancient, or that it has wandered in from the Ukraine.

Any attempt to fix the age of the Latvian epigrams is defeated by their brevity. There are more shreds of evidence attached to those of Lithuania, though they are not easy to clarify. One piece collected by Juškėvič (*Liet. Dainos* 1162), entitled *Five Brothers*, relates the sufferings of prisoners driven into Tilsit and flogged to death with green willow withes. There are no notes as to arms and accoutrements, but the tyrants are called crusaders. That being so, they can hardly be other than knights of the Teutonic Order, whose power was shattered at the battle of Tannenberg in 1410. It is presumptive evidence that the 'daina' was already an established form in the early fifteenth century, though we must admit that the case rests on a single word. Apart from this instance, when allusions can be caught, it is to events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: to an attack on Danzig, which may have been that of 1734 (Nesselmann 23), in which ravens are depicted bringing back, as in Serbian songs, the white hand of a slain hero; to Küstrin or Kunersdorf in 1759; to the battle of Rosieny (Juškėvič 102), and to Kościusko's son (Nesselmann 52). The Russians are regarded as compatriots, and the foreigners are Germans and French. The former are usually regarded with sympathy, the latter as enemies:

The French king's  
a mighty robber,  
the Prussian king's  
a mighty hero. (Nesselmann 28.)

The historical situation is that of the Napoleonic Wars, from Tilsit to Montmartre. One singer, unusually generous of detail, tells us that Yorck faces Bertrand at Wartenburg, Kleist faces Vandamme, Bülow is in Berlin, and Blücher directs (Juškėvič 1150). *Pats Blūkeris*, 'Father Blücher', is as familiar to Lithuanians as to Germans, and the situation is summed up that 'were Blücher not alive, the Prussian land were destroyed'. One seldom encounters a ballad that praises the French at the expense of the Germans (Juškėvič 1106), though that may accord with the sympathies of Lithuanians in the days of Jena, while there was still small risk of the invasion of Russia. A similar inference as to date may be made from the

conscripts' ballads which, if they mention a master, it is the King of Prussia, and if they mention an enemy, it is France. With identifications such as these, the *Five Brothers* seems singularly isolated in the fifteenth century.

The ninth century has been claimed for the antiquity of 'dainos'. I do not know on what evidence the claim is based, nor whether any attempt has been made to distinguish between the word in the general sense of 'song' and the poems of precisely the modern mould and texture. The claim cannot be supported, at least, by reference to the numerous pagan 'dainos', which refer to the thunder-god Perkuns, Luck and Ill-luck (*Laimė* and *Nelaimė*), the Moon-god and Sun-goddess, Žemyna who governs earth, and the deities of the sea. The bigamy of the Moon-god is thus recorded:

Moon brings the Sun, a bride, home,  
'twas in the first of Springtides.

The Sun arose so early.  
her had the Moon deserted.

Alone the Moon did ramble  
and wooed the Star of Morning.

But Perkuns, filled with fury,  
he swung his sword and cleft him.

'Why'st thou the Sun deserted?  
why wooed the Star of Morning,  
by night a lonely Rambler?'

(Rhesa 27, Leskien, *Lit. Les.* 1.)

According to another version (Nesselmann 4), the god split an oak and sprinkled blood on a maiden's frock; the blood could only be cleansed when nine suns rose on a happy morning. These whimsical pranks of the deities give a childish charm to the 'dainos'; and it is a pretty touch, in some orphan ballads, to declare that the orphan's only kin are Moon, Sun, and Stars.

The Latvian 'dainas' offer us more intimate glimpses, though tantalizing. A vast amount of detail is preserved in Barons' collection in nearly twelve hundred songs; but as they are so short, one seldom gets more than a stray note. Some are charming vignettes:

The Sun at even goes to bed  
and she bedecks the forest's summits:  
she gives the lime a golden crown,

she gives the oak a crown of silver,  
and on the tiny willow-tree  
she slips a lover's ring of silver.

(Barons 33879, Jonval 203.)

Sometimes the information has the merit of oddity:

The heavenly Forger toils in heaven,  
his sparks fall glittering Dvina-wards;  
he forges for that girl a crown—  
for that girl who has nine brothers.

(Barons 33722, Jonval 453.)

Or

Perkuns has nine black horses,  
the nine have stones for fodder,  
and silver drink for water,  
of shining steel the trough is.

(Barons 33705, Jonval 429.)

At other times we hear of the services rendered by the gods. Perkuns rides the sea and blasts oaks, but he it is who causes grain to swell in the barley. Still more beneficent are the Sun and Laime, since they concern themselves with human joys and are especially kind to orphans:

White, so white, a spirit comes  
at eventide at set of sun.  
Nay, 'tis not a spirit white,  
'tis the orphan's loved Laime.  
'Come, good evening, little orphan !  
Time, they say, for your betrothal.'  
'Whither can I go, dear Laime?  
Not a thing have I that's needed !  
not a glove, and not a stocking,  
neither have white woollen blankets.'  
'Go, dear maiden, cease to tarry !  
I must give you what is needed,  
I must give you gloves and stockings,  
I give you white woollen blankets.'  
'But no bullocks, but no oxen  
have I, nor a sorrel pony.'  
'I'll give bullocks, I'll give oxen,  
I must give a sorrel pony.'  
Come, all people, come and see then  
how the wooers court the orphan,

how they herd the bulls and oxen,  
 how they herd the sorrel ponies;  
 and her trousseau—gloves and stockings  
 packed between white woollen blankets.

(Endzelin 36, Barons 4976.)

These poems are indeed interesting and tell us much concerning the intellectual background of the 'dainos' and 'dainas'; but they do not give their age. The Baltic peoples remained pagans officially until the opening of the great Jagellonian period, and Chaucer's 'verray parfit gentle Knight' endeavoured, with blows, to change their beliefs:

Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne  
 aboven alle naciouns in Puce.  
 In *Lettow* hadde he reysed, and in Ruce,  
 no Cristen man so ofte of his degree.

Jagiello's politic conversion did not affect the mass of the people. In the fields and forests the ancient deities still commanded belief and affection, and as late as the seventeenth century a missionary was informed that there were as many gods as places, persons, and wants. The singing of 'dainos' was considered a heathen practice, as that of 'laulud' in Esthonia, until as late as the middle of the nineteenth century; and pious 'giesmes' circulated in opposition to them, but with a sharp trench between. The epoch of universal heathenism, then, reached to the late fourteenth century, and that of popular heathenism almost to our own times; the pagan spirit of the 'dainos' and 'dainas' cannot be used in evidence for their antiquity.

For the rest, the poems of the two small Baltic peoples, being essentially lyrical, must be reduced to a small summary in a book devoted to narrative verse. They are poems of ploughmen and fishers, who have no history beyond the needs of the day and season, and no delight in war and ambition. They speak of the sorrows and devastation of wars, of the pain of parting, when the conscript rides away saying 'Nevermore', to leave his body on the field and a riderless horse as a token. Maidens are advised not to follow the troops, since ploughmen make more constant husbands. Better be a yokel than a trooper, or even a rich man, artisan, or boyar. Then follow ballads of domestic occasions. Over and over again we follow the round of falling in love, wooing, wedding, marrying, crooning lullabies, dying. Toil quickly ages the peasant

woman. Courtship is the one happy moment; for marriage drags her away to a strange land and folk, and her life becomes an unending burden. But the maid is happy and expectant. She sports her wreath of rue, and makes pretty fancies revolve about it. But it may be withered by scandal or suspicion, or lost by carelessness. She may lose a ring also at the fountain or in a wood, and its recovery is the equivalent of a proposal of marriage. The youth, for his part, is a ploughboy or fisherboy. He sleeps in a stable and rides a-wooing on a brown horse. The encounter may be anywhere, but the proposal must be in due form to the assembled family. Then there is bustle about the trousseau, which should have been gathered in the years of spinsterhood, but may not yet be ready. The old folk lose a spinner or a farm-hand, and feel the economic strain keenly. A wagon takes away the gathered trousseau, and if its wheels break, that is a sign of bad luck. Then on the wedding morning the girl wakes brightly enough, but is soon crying in her parents' arms and lamenting her long voyage. Sometimes she has to reproach them for sending her so far away: two hundred miles is as bad an estrangement as the circumference of the globe. Or she may complain that she has been paired off with a knave. Then there are the heavy songs of toil, aggravated by the habits of the husband. He lolls in taverns and sings songs in praise of hops, rye, and barley. Then there are the liquid cradle-songs, and at long last there are dirges in measured prose. The song may be about the song itself, which is a kind of companion always at the singer's side:

Singing born, a-singing grew I,  
singing all my life must pass,  
singing goes the soul within me  
in the garden of God's sons.

(Barons 3, Endzelin 1.)

### 8. *Esthonia, Finland*

In the previous chapter attention has been drawn to the common elements of ballad technique which prevail in the two Baltic countries of Indo-European speech and the two which speak varieties of Finnish.<sup>1</sup> The Esthonian tongue is as intimately connected with Finnish as are the dialects of a West European speech; the ballad style, the themes, and the quasi-epic associations are

<sup>1</sup> See Note M, p. 390.

those of Finland also, though less perfectly exemplified. There is but one ballad manner in Esthonia and Finland, the pattern of which is to be found in the songs of Eastern Finland or Karelia, collected by Elias Lönnrot. In these songs the line is of eight syllables. The spoken accent is free, but the music imposes a trochaic rhythm. There is no rhyme or assonance, save what may occur by chance. Parallelism is a conspicuous feature of the style, and it tends to break up lyrical passages into approximately equal blocks; but the stanza is not achieved, and in narrative pieces there is practically no such division of the material. Thus far there is no essential difference between the Finnish-Esthonian style and that of their immediate neighbours in the south.

The difference arises in the use of alliteration. Alliteration is frequent in the folk-songs of all Nordic peoples, but in Finland (and to a less extent in Esthonia) it is so prominent as to become a prosodic norm. The accentuation of the first syllable of every word encourages the use of this device, and the hint may have come originally from the Swedes. In Eddic verse and in the modern Icelandic 'rímur' the recurrence of certain initial letters follows a fixed pattern. There is no fixed pattern in Finnish alliteration. It may affect all the words of a line, and generally does affect two at least; but these words are not required to occupy a fixed position. On the other hand Finnish alliteration really affects more than an initial letter. The language is relatively poor in consonants, and the vowels also, divided into three classes by the laws of vowel-harmony, are relatively few, but well defined. The alliteration is satisfied, indeed, by its occurrence in the first letter of words, but the following vowels usually correspond, either as being identical or as being associated in the regular permutations, and there may be several other consonants and vowels yielding echoes.<sup>1</sup> They are due, as in the 'rímur', to the application of a high technical standard to the composition of popular verse. It would be hard to decide whether this standard was original or elaborated in more recent times. In Esthonian verse it is more arbitrary and fluctuating. Though the surviving forms in Finland are the older, they are encountered in regions which were not the home and focus of Finnish balladry, but have suffered displacement towards the periphery of that culture.

The Finnish ballads have been pressed back from the coastal

<sup>1</sup> See Note N, p. 390.



lands into the eastern interior. They flourish now in Karelia, and it is the Karelian dialect which has come to be considered the language of poetry, though the modern literary tongue is that of the western towns. The study of ballad variants has proved this movement. One notices also that the scene of action is usually the coast—the fortress of Viipuri or Viborg, and the province of Hämä. There are cases of ballads which have ascended, in all probability, from Esthonia. Such a one is *Kanteletar* 4, a version of the widespread *Dives and Lazarus*, in which Lazarus is identified as an Esthonian slave. In Esthonian folk-songs there is emphasis on the norms established by the coastal towns, especially by Riga. The contents of such songs show that they belong to peasants and fishermen; but their inventors insist that the matter has come from the towns. They insist, moreover, that the matter is German; to be German is a guarantee of merit:

Folk-songs are no songs for babies,  
songs for babes or scolding women,  
folk-songs are fine German ditties,  
cradle-songs for our young lordlings,  
drinking-songs that please the junkers.

(*Vana Kannel*, i. 3.)

The great city is Riga, a city of Latvia under the control of German barons and merchants. These allusions are evidence that the ballad came to Esthonia from the south-west.

To be more precise, the Germans referred to in the ballads are 'Saxons'. Such indications accentuate the importance of the pieces which have international connexions. *The Murderess of her Husband* (*Vana Kannel*, i. 111) belongs to the series of ballads on this crime, which are current also in Poland and Czechoslovakia. It contains even the swift set of searching questions which are to be met with elsewhere. *The Bride Murderer* (*Vana Kannel*, i. 109) is more difficult to place. It resembles the *Hallewijn* ballads in its 'leit-motif', but in some of the details it recalls our *Edward*. *Edward* is directly represented in Finland by the modern *Bloody Son* (*Verinen poika*, Arwidsson, ii. 87), a translation from the Swedish. *The uncharitable Relatives* (*Vana Kannel*, i. 103) is a ballad of useless appeals to relatives for help—on this occasion, for the means of avoiding conscript service. The tableau is a familiar one in those ballads which end by the generous sacrifices of a lover; but in this poem no lover appears, and the recruit leaves bitter legacies to his

people. It is, therefore, not certain that this Esthonian ballad belongs to the international cycle indicated. No doubt attaches to *The Daughter at her Mother's Grave* (*Vana Kannel* 68), which exists in several versions and stands especially close to the Lithuanian ballad. In Finland, *Inkeri's Suitors* (*Kanteletar*: Virsi-Lauluja 9) is a ballad of the cycle of the crusader's return. Lalmanti the great 'reiter' leaves home; Eirikki falsely reports his death to Inkeri; Lalmanti returns. The names suggest Swedish provenience. *The Sea-Suitors* (*Kanteletar*: Virsi-Lauluja 38) is one of the *Merman* cycle. Among religious pieces Lönnrot printed one on St. Catherine, a Dives and Lazarus with somewhat original details, and a Magdalene (*Kanteletar*: Virsi-Lauluja 3, 4, 5). In a general way, all Christian ballads are evidence of the influence of Central and Western Europe upon Finland and Esthonia. So, *Maid Mary's Verse* (*Kanteletar*: Virsi-Lauluja 6), the longest of all these pieces, must be included among ballads indicating a foreign influence. It certainly originated in the Christian towns of the western coast, and not in Karelia, where it is now encountered.

The names of the Finnish and Esthonian types of folk-verse also bear witness to the same effect. The indigenous word is 'laulu' 'song'. Two terms are current for 'narrative song', and of these Lönnrot allows 'virsi' 'verse' as more appropriate to the traditional ballad. In Esthonia one encounters 'viizi' (*Vana Kannel*, i. 6), which is the German 'Weise' or Swedish 'visa'. The word 'runo' does not prevail in Esthonia, but only in Finland, where it is a sign of Scandinavian guidance. Apart from the word 'laulu', therefore, all the nouns involved indicate German or Swedish models. Naturally, this evidence is more cogent when we consider the new stanzaic songs which, in the coastal cities, have taken away the fame of the Finnish 'runot'. Lönnrot printed twenty-four such pieces in the preface to his *Kanteletar*. They are in a variety of metres: couplets with and without refrains, quatrains, verses of five, six, seven, and eight lines. The length of the individual lines also varies, and among the terms used to describe this sort of folk-poetry we find 'romantsi', the Spanish word which had been acclimatized in Germany in the early nineteenth century.

Historical ballads give some indication of the age of the 'laulud' also. The allusions in Hurt's *Vana Kannel* are few and vague. There are conscript-ballads, and they refer to service in the Russian armies. A couple of songs refer to a raid on the island of Oesel, off

the mouth of the Gulf of Riga (*Vana Kannel* 100, 101). The enemy are Swedes, and the date would seem to be the seventeenth or early eighteenth century. In the *Kanteletar*, No. 10 refers to an attack by Ivan of Russia on the frontier fortress of Viipuri (Viborg) in the sixteenth century; No. 11, *Jakko Puntus*, tells of an attack on Riga, which was held by insurgents in the last years of the sixteenth century; and *Charles's Army* (No. 12) is an account of the Swedish disaster at Pultava in 1709, ending with the return of Charles XII to Sweden. It is a counterblast to the Swedish ballad of Narva. Earlier than these is *Elina's Death* (No. 8). It is probably the best of the Finnish narratives—a grim history of the mutual hate of two women, of adultery and of ferocious murder. The foundation of the ballad is an actual occurrence of the fifteenth century; in modern times the ballad has been made into a drama and represented on the stage. An older event still is the killing of *Bishop Henry* in 1157. Bishop Henry, the apostle of Finland, was an Englishman. In the ballad we overhear his interview with the Swedish king (Erik), and the defiance which he suffered from the pagans. It is a spirited ballad, but we are not compelled to believe it the work of a contemporary. A martyr's reputation was, of necessity, in the hands of the clerks, and one of them could confect a ballad out of the available materials at any date whatsoever. The religious ballads are Catholic in sentiment, and so represent a point of view which no longer prevailed after the sixteenth century.

A high antiquity, as we have seen in the neighbouring lands, cannot be attributed to Finnish and Esthonian ballads on the evidence of their paganism alone. Lönnrot grouped pagan and Catholic ballads together as if concurrent, and the founder of Finnish literature, Bishop Agricola, drew up a list of deities still revered by rural Finns and Carelians in 1551. In eastern Esthonia pagan practices survived into the nineteenth century, and pious Lutherans identified all folk-song with superstition. These beliefs were doubtless older than Christianity, but without other evidence we cannot say when they were embodied in folk-songs, and particularly when they took the precisely defined form of the extant ballads. They are the gods and heroes of the *Kalevala* and *Kalevipoeg*, and the wonder-workers to whom the magical 'loitsu-runoja' are addressed. There are Ukko the All-Father, also known in Esthonia as Taara, and Jumala, whose name was taken by the God of the Christians; Pikne, the god of thunder, Tuoni, of death;

Vänämöinen, a water-god and god of song, who is the hero of the *Kalevala*, along with the divine smith Ilmarinen and the sprightly Lemminkainen; the giant son of Kalev, who is the hero of the *Kalevipoeg*; and many another. An indigenous name for Pikne is Aike; Pikne, or Pikker, is the Perkunas or Perkuns of the Lithuanians and Latvians and the Perun of the Russians, and he has also the attributes of Thor. One Esthonian earth-spirit, Lijon, even owes his name and fame to the Bible; he is the 'Legion' of Mark v. 9 and Luke viii. 30. These deities are shape-shifters and wonder-workers; they are shamans of vast power. The wizard has skill not merely to deal with devils, to 'conjure up spirits from the vasty deep'; he alone can approach the gods and have power to constrain them. Hence the practice of witchcraft was so firmly rooted in Finland and Lapland as to arrest the attention of all superstitious Europe. For all moments, embarrassments, and occupations there were spells, which have remained to this day. The method is to flatter an enemy, such as a bear, even after death; to know its names and its composition, so as to be able to dissolve and disarm it. There are samples of such incantations in the *Kalevala*, since Vänämöinen, god of music, was pre-eminent in wizardry.

The very act of singing was magical. Between chant and incantation there was no frontier:

Let us go and frame our ditties,  
knot the ancient words together,  
set in order gifts of friendship,  
float them with the river's current,  
roll them with the waves of ocean,  
rear them with the precipices:  
what from Gold they've listened unto,  
what from Silver comprehended,  
what revealed from Wanemuine,  
what have learned from Taara's wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

The singers hold hands and sway rhythmically as they chant. The practice is, doubtless, all that remains of a dance, but it is also a method of incantation. There is wizardry also in the choice of a magical stone for the singer to sit on, and in the old practice of singing naked. With the beginnings of song in Finland and Esthonia these incantations have much to do; but the present

<sup>1</sup> F. Kreützwald and H. Neus, *Mythische und magische Lieder der Ehsten*, St. Petersburg, 1854, p. 24. 'Wanemuine' is the Esthonian form of Vänämöinen.

inquiry is more narrow. Folk-songs of one kind or another have doubtless existed for millenia, and they may even be, as Lönnrot observed, as old as the human race; but ballads of the still extant types have had a definite beginning. They may have been powerfully influenced by pre-existing magical runes, though it would be almost impossible to prove this by dated examples. They have also exerted a reciprocal influence on the forms of the incantations. But the only sure evidence of their date and provenience are the marks they still bear: the dates indicated by their historical allusions, the correspondence of their plots with those of neighbouring lands, and the resemblances we have noted in their prosody.

These magical ballads throw light on the incantations in the two national epics, and there are narratives also which relate epical episodes. It is thus that, in the far North, we encounter again the problem of epico-ballad relationships, and that under conditions that seem to promise a definitive solution. This hope attracted to their study one of the keenest minds of Europe, that of Domenico Comparetti.<sup>1</sup> The first ballad reproduced by Lönnrot is *Suometar's Wooers*. Suometar is born from a duck's egg, and the Moon, Sun, and North Star come to woo her; she refuses the Moon as a wanderer and the Sun as capricious, but weds the North Star. In this form the ballad is somewhat suspect, for it seems too tidy an allegory to be traditional. Suometar means, being interpreted, Finland's daughter; and, apart from the difficult mythological business about the egg, one understands only too easily why Finland's daughter should marry the North Star. In the *Kalevala* (xi, line 21 ff.) we have a more mythological presentation of the same events: Kyllikki refuses Sun, Moon, and Star, but she is not herself an allegory. Still more convincing is the episode of Salmi's wooers in the *Kalevipoeg* (i. 177-450), where Salmi is a goddess, not a representative figure, and accepts the North Star after refusing the Moon and Sun. Her experience was repeated in that of her daughter Linda (recited in the same canto), who had many suitors before she took Kalev, the father of the hero. Similarly, the second of Lönnrot's ballads, *Lyyliki's Snow-running*, corresponds to the forging of snow-shoes for Lemminkainen by Kauppi in the *Kalevala* (xiii), when Lemminkainen wished to hunt Hiisi's elk. In this way the scholar has both the epos and the ballad

<sup>1</sup> D. Comparetti, *The Traditional Poetry of the Finns*, transl. Isabella M. Anderson, London, 1898.

still surviving in authentic forms, and the way appears to be open for a definite judgement as to their relations.

Such a judgement cannot be given. The *Kalevipoeg* had to be left out of the reckoning, according to Comparetti, because of 'the liberty which Kreutzwald allowed himself in the composition of the poem (he even went so far as to versify prose stories and sagas), and the ugly fact that he burned his manuscripts'. We are left with the *Kalevala*, but we find that this is not an epos in any of the accepted senses of that term. The *Kalevala* was constructed out of the ballads by a scholar who was also a very fine poet; with the lightest of touches he harmonized many things said and sung about Vänämöinen and Lemminkainen, and he found a place for many incantations and bridal songs. With consummate tact Lönnrot gave his poem a uniform texture, consecutive episodes, and a fine 'Götterdämmerung' in the last canto; but the *Kalevala* has no real unity of action or hero or traditional transmission. The *Kalevala* is definitely un-Homeric. Andrew Lang was overjoyed to discover that Comparetti's investigations gave no support to the theorists who supposed the *Iliad* to be stitched together from pre-existing ballads. Rather, the instance of this poem shows that even the most skilful stitching does not produce an epic. Contrariwise, of course, the comparison of Finnish ballads and epos will not serve those who may hold the theory that ballads are epic detritus.

Jakob Hurt's collection of Esthonian folk-songs shows that in general they revolve around the same themes as those of Lithuania and the later German balladry. They are chiefly songs of domestic occasions or adapted to particular occupations. Hurt's divisions are into songs about songs, for girls, wooing, marriage, man and wife, counsel, the unfortunate, work, jests, conscription, some narratives, and miscellanea. Those who sing them are evidently peasants and fishermen, as in Lithuania. A girl is advised to prefer a ploughman husband to any one else, and an idle husband or wife is a crowning misfortune. To offset this impression is the importance which the singers attach to the towns as providing the standards of their art; particularly notable is the place assigned to the Latvian port of Riga. Marriage is, for peasants, the beginning of a kind of slavery. The husband and his folk are, as with the Lithuanians, 'strangers'; in one he is called 'the bad one'. A woman may even marry the Evil One himself (*Vana Kannel* 53, 54). Orphans are assigned a sad pre-eminence in ballads of woe.

In all this there is great similarity between the various Baltic balladries. If one should note the dearth of mythological matter in Hurt's collection, a reference to that of Neus corrects the wrong impression. Compared with their neighbours to the south, the Esthonians have a more narrative technique. There is no trace of the epigrammatic Latvian style, which is probably of quite recent development. There is parallelism, but not so ornamentally arranged as in Lithuanian 'dainos'; nor does the poet spare precise details. The work is still, however, lyrical, save in the case of a handful of narratives, since the details do not cohere into a story.

The art of the Finnish ballad is both more exact and more epical. Lönnrot's divisions are into 'Songs for everybody', 'Songs for different people', and 'Ballads and Romances'. These three sections make up the *Kanteletar*, and they show the predominance of domestic and occupational interests which we have noted in the other countries. To these have to be added his other collections: the *Loitsurunoja* or magical runes, and the *Sananlaskut* or proverbs. Yet the ballads, though outnumbered, are well-articulated narratives in a technique that shows no sign of ageing. With the Finns of Karelia one creative impetus reaches its utmost bound: along the shores of the White Sea. Beside the Arctic Ocean the Lapps have an equal reputation for wizardry, and they sing ballads in a ruder style, but employing a technique often recognizably Finnish.

### III

#### BALKAN BALLADS

##### 1. *Asia Minor, Greece*

ARETHAS of Caesarea (850-932), commenting on the word 'agyrtēs', noted that it means 'mountebanks', such as, for instance, the accursed Paphlagonians who contrive songs on the experiences of distinguished persons, and sing them, at an obol apiece, round the houses.<sup>1</sup> It is in this casual manner that ballads cross our view not merely for the first time in Greek lands, but in all Europe. The pedant, picking up straws of information and hoarding them like a jackdaw, has preserved unsuspectingly a jewel. The themes of these songs, the humble style, and the manner of performance indicate unmistakably ballads in existence in the early tenth century. The minstrels are Paphlagonians, or, as we might now prefer to say, Cappadocians, since the word Cappadocian is attached by modern critics to all Akritic verse. They were not Greeks of the European mainland, still less were they the cultured citizens of Constantinople. In Constantinople the ancient literary culture had not died, though it had dwindled. The anthologies continued to receive epigrams in classical elegiac couplets which ignored the change in the vernacular from tone-accents to stress. There was no want of grammarians in the Greek capital to check deviations from the established norms of speech. New themes and passions forced their way into verse, and the 'politic' measure arose for the use of chroniclers and court poets; but its use was controlled in the capital. It was only on the far-flung frontiers that an entirely traditional poetry was possible: in Paphlagonia and Cappadocia and on the bend of the Euphrates.

On the frontier medievalism had begun while the great cities still clung to the skirts of the ancient world. A kind of feudalism had been set up. The Saracen peril was ever present; the borderers could not wait for the cumbrous mobilizing of the imperial armies, but had to defend themselves against sudden forays, often by initiating raids of reprisal. The remote intrigues of the capital were not their affair, though dynasties might rise and fall. Their independence was accentuated by the sectarian revolt of the

<sup>1</sup> S. Kyriakides, *Ellenike Laographia*, Athens, 1923, p. 81. Quoted by H. Grégoire.



Paulicians in the eighth century, which the emperors drowned in blood only after a tradition of fine generalship had been set up by the Paulician commander Corbeas. Only strong emperors—two Basils and John Tzimiskes—appeared on this borderland, the Percies of which were the powerful Doukas family. On the other side also, it was not from the distant caliph of Baghdad that peace and war were to be expected but from the more imminent power of the emirs of Edessa. No general plan governed the war. There were daring razzias, brilliant single-handed achievements in which a man might owe everything to his armour or his horse, ambushes, and sudden eclipse. Such were, no doubt, the 'experiences of distinguished persons' which the accursed Paphlagonians touted from door to door, at an obol apiece, in the first years of the tenth century.

To all such poetry it is customary to assign the epithet 'Akritic'. Digenis Akritas was a historical personage who perished in battle some ten years after Roland and his peers died at Roncesvalles. H. Grégoire<sup>1</sup> has recognized his name in that of Diogenes, turkmarch of the Anatolians, who perished at the skirmish of Kopidladon in 788. The site was probably a defile (kome Podandos) of the chief pass leading from Cilicia into Cappadocia. Popular tradition assigned to him as a place of burial the tomb constructed for one of the Commagenian kinglets on an abrupt hillock overlooking the Cappadox or Gok-sü, which flows into the Euphrates near Samosata. His mother was of the house of Doukas, and his father an emir. According to Grégoire, this emir must have been the Abû-Hafs, grandson of 'Umar al-Nu'mân (who perished gloriously in 863), who carried his tribe of the Banû-Habib over to the Greeks in 928. So, for Diogenes, we get Digenes (pronounced Digenis or Dienis) 'born of two races'. The hero's personal name thus became a nickname, and in the epics he is called Basileios. A further by-name was Akritas 'the frontiersman', a title which he shared with such other champions as Porphyrios, the Farfurius of the Persian epics. Scarcely distinguishable from these defenders of the frontiers were the Apelates (Philopappos, Kinnamos, Ioannakis), who were rievors and robbers. Their names appear in the ballads, but their exploits were in a large measure annexed to the glory of Digenis. His feats of strength were those historically associated

<sup>1</sup> H. Grégoire, 'Le tombeau et la date de Digénis Akritas' and 'Autour de Digénis Akritas', *Byzantion* v-vii, 1929-32; S. Kyriakides, 'O Digenes Akritas (Syllogos pros diadosin ôphelimon bibliôn, 45), Athens.

with the name of the emperor Basil I, of titanic memory; and his weapon—a club—may have been that of Hercules. Another name which appears in the Akritic ballads is that of Tsamados, otherwise unknown; there is a Kimiskes derived from the emperor John Tzimiskes (969–76), a certain Skleropoulos or Syropoulos (i.e. a Syrian), and Amouropoulos, a hero of Amorium (captured in 838). Above all these names, however, that of Constantine prevails in the ballads, taking the place of the Sweet William of Scotland or the Stojan of Bulgaria. He is generally called Constantine the Little, Mikrokonstantinos, or Kôstantas or Kôsta.

Digenis, a hero of both ballads and an epos,<sup>1</sup> was so well known in one or the other capacity that the emperor Manuel Comnenus (1143–80) could be addressed as ‘the new Akritas’. As the panegyrist, Theodore Prodromos, goes on to mention the hero’s club, his allusion is satisfied rather by the epic poems than by the ballads. Akritas’ club spoils many a promising encounter; he bludgeons his enemies before his admirers can savour the piercing emotions of doubtful battle. His crudity is the more strange because the poet has read some of the best epic models. He quotes textually from the *Iliad* and the Bible; he knows either his Quintus Curtius or one of the Alexander-romances; he has enjoyed Greek novels, and cites *Aldelaga and Olope*. The Greek is tolerably accurate, especially in the Trebizond manuscript, and the whole poem is sub-literary rather than oral and traditional. Yet its conduct is a series of failures; the poet continues to outline dramatic situations, which he continues to fizzle through sheer lack of gift for narrative. It is the most disappointing of popular epic poems; for there is no doubt of its popularity. Its influence has spread to Russia, Armenia, and the Syrian Arabs, and the Turkish hero Sayyid Battâl is a kinsman in spirit of Digenis Akritas.<sup>2</sup>

The first three books detail the romance of Digenis’s birth: his mother was carried off by the emir Mousour during an absence from home of her brothers; they followed the raiders, upbraided

<sup>1</sup> *Basileios Digenes Akrites*, ed. C. Sathas and E. Legrand (Collection de Monuments pour servir à l’étude de la langue néo-hellénique, nouv. sér. 6) Athens-Paris, 1875, reproduces a fifteenth-century manuscript from Trebizond. The manuscript of Andros is allied to this by their inserting in the hero’s family tree a certain Aaron, identified as a duke of Edessa in the eleventh century. In the Grottaferrata manuscript Digenis’s maternal grandfather is said to have been ‘Antakinos apo tôn Kinnamadôn’. A variorum edition is needed in order to establish the relationship of the various manuscripts.

<sup>2</sup> See Note O, p. 391.

the captor, agreed to a match and reconciliation, and so provoked a spectacular conversion to Christianity of the emir and all his tribe. This section may be described as the 'geste' of the emir. Two books then describe Digenis's prowess as a hunter, modelled on that of the emperor Basil I as given in Gesenius, *Liber Regum*. The date of this work is not quite certain; it does not appear to have been available until the second half of the tenth century, and so gives a date 'a quo' for the formation of the epos. The hero's successful elopement with Eudoxia Doukas is also given in this section. There follow two books of the hero's reminiscences: an adventure with the daughter of Haplorrhabdis, and the defence of Eudoxia against the amorous Philopappos and the Amazon Maximo. It was a grievous mistake to relate these things in the first person. An elaborate account of the castle and paradise built by Akritas on the banks of the Euphrates occupies the eighth book; which is followed by an account of his mother's illness in the ninth, and his own death (with Eudoxia's) in the tenth. Though not a ballad sequence, this disjointed narrative may well be the result of attempting to reproduce the episodes of a ballad cycle in the grand manner.

The priority of the ballads over the epos is taken for granted by modern scholars. They contain incidents not to be encountered in the longer poems, and they relate the common episodes in quite another fashion. They cannot be fragments mechanically produced; nor have they been stitched together by rhapsodes. It would appear rather that they have been harmonized, rationalized, and subjected to capricious selection and alteration. This treatment was meted out to them, according to Grégoire, before the year 944; since the Grottaferrata speaks of the Sacred Face as being at Edessa, whence it was transferred to Constantinople in that year. The argument seems doubtful. There is no reason why a poet should not place in Edessa a relic known to have been there in his hero's days; and the date cannot be squared with the use made of Gesenius. A cautious scholarship would be satisfied with the twelfth century as the 'terminus ad quem', guaranteed by the compliment paid to the emperor Manuel Comnenus. One complication is that the names of ballad heroes permutate, and the same action is current under several names. Even in the epic it is clear that one of the author's hopes is to eclipse anything that may be said or sung of the leading Apelates, who doubtless had their own 'gestes'. H. Grégoire has offered identifications. Philopappos

he would take to be Antiochus Philopappos, the last king of Commagene, whose tomb was erected at Athens between A.D. 114 and 116, and what was said of him constituted an 'épopée commagénienne'. If this identification seems adventurous, there is at least some evidence that the original hero of a ballad of bride-stealing was Philopappos, not Digenis. The exploit is simply transferred by the epic poet to his own hero; in some ballads Chiliopappos (who is Philopappos) figures as a go-between, and so as a friend of the hero whose constant enemy he is in the epos. Kinnamos is identified as the rival of Artabanès III of Parthia (Josephus, xx, 3, 2), whose son Gotarzes is a hero of the *Shahnameh*. Farfurius of the *Shahnameh* is the Porphyrios of the Greek ballads. All these matters are very obscure, but they amount in sum to evidence of a considerable burst of creative energy in an Akritic age of Greek literature.

The epos helps us to set in some kind of order the surviving Akritic ballads,<sup>1</sup> though not to make absolutely certain identifications. *The brave Girl and the Saracen* (Politis 72 A) is a stirring ballad of chase and capture: the girl is an Amazon chased by a more powerful Saracen; she hides in an icon of St. George, and only surrenders when her lover turns Christian. The Saracen takes the name of Kôstantês and says their son will be called Iannês. If this Amazon is to be identified with Digenis's mother, one cannot but note the discrepancy between the ballad and the epic treatment. A closer parallel is the ballad entitled *Andronikos' Son*, of which the Trebizond version is entitled *Porphyrios* (Sathas and Legrand, *Basileios Digenes Akrites*). This concerns a youth who grows prodigiously. His mother has been stolen by an emir when enceinte; she is said to be the wife of Andronikos, and yet cryptically declares the child to be the emir's son. He grows prodigiously:

One year of age he takes the sword, at two a long lance seizes,  
and when his years were close on three, was a pallicar renowned.

<sup>1</sup> S. Kyriakides, *O Digenês Akrites*, Athens, no date; N. G. Politis, *Eklogai apo ta Tragoudia tou 'Ellenikou Laou*, 3 ed., Athens, 1932 (which omits some of the most characteristic); S. Baud-Bovy, *Chansons du Dodecanèse*, i, Athens, 1935, ii, Paris, 1936 (with valuable notes); P. Arabantinos, *Sylloge demodôn asmatôn tes Epeirou*, Athens, 1880; E. Legrand, *Recueil des Chansons populaires grecques* (Coll. de Mon. pour servir à l'étude de la langue néo-hellénique), Athens-Paris, 1874; Lucy M. Garnett and J. S. Stuart-Glennie, *Greek Folk-Poesy*, i, London, 1896. A. Passow's *Carmina popularia Graeciae recentioris*, Leipzig, 1860, contains no Akritic pieces, though it is otherwise a standard of reference. Fauriel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne*, Paris 1824-8, is the pathfinder to these studies.

The Saracens cannot bind him, and he sets out to seek his father. At the end of his first month Porphyrios was singing in the streets of the capital:

O I have loved a maiden free, I love the king's dear daughter—

which caused considerable annoyance at Constantinople (or Nicaea according to another version): this affair probably had nothing to do with Digenis, whose youthful feats are copied by the epic poet from Gesenius's *De Regum*.

His suit to Eudoxia was opposed, according to the epos, by her family. A ballad (Politis 74) tells how Mikrokonstantinos sent Chiliopappos, Phocas, Nikêphoros and Petrotrachêlos (or Tro-mantacheilos) as his go-betweens, only to be rebuffed by Liogen-nêtê's mother. He penetrates to her chamber in woman's clothes, like Hagbard, and the episode ends in a double tragedy. In the epos, the family gave chase, and were taught by hard blows to recognize in Digenis a worthy son-in-law. In the epos, Philopappos makes determined efforts to steal Eudoxia, both by his own might and by invoking the aid of the Amazon Maximo. In the ballad the hero speaks in person (Politis 75):

Now as I drank and banqueted beside my marble tables,  
my coal-black steed began to neigh and sword in scabbard rattled,  
'twas then my heart bestirred itself to court my true beloved.

The thought was well timed, because only the swiftness of his grey mare enabled the hero to reach her before she married another husband. Some versions call the hero Iannakis, and this ballad is one of the *Moringer* cycle, like the Serbian *Marko frees his Beloved* and other ballads in Serbian, Bulgarian, and Rumanian. In *Syropoulos* or *Skleropoulos* (Kyriakides) we encounter a youth who sets out to steal his uncle Kôstantâs's bride. He persists despite the evil omens; putting his uncle out of action, he seizes the lady and flees. Kôstantâs picks his swiftest horse, obtains news from a shepherd, cuts his way through an army on the frontier, and cuts off the ravisher's head. This would appear to represent the genuine Akritic tradition. The victim was probably Iannakis. A somewhat similar pursuit is related in the ballad of *Amouris* or *Amouropoulos* (Kyriakides). The young Amouropoulos begs his mother to allow him to pursue the Saracens. She agrees, if he can wield his father's arms. He is able to do so, and hurries to the Euphrates. Arrived

there, he would have had to suffer the taunts of the Saracen without retaliating had not an angel helped him to leap the stream. He destroys an army, but a spy steals his horse. The horse and trappings are recognized by his father, who is a prisoner in the Saracen camp at the Cilician Gates and is forced to write a letter forbidding his son's advance. Amouropoulos answered only with threats, and the emir preferred to be reconciled to so doughty an adversary by offering him his daughter. The ballad has been explained as a sublimation of the sack of Amorium in 838, showing both the furious Greek reaction to the defeat and the policy of appeasement on the frontier. It may be so, though the historical touches are slight; but it is undoubtedly an old ballad that contemplates a frontier on the Euphrates or at the Cilician Gates. *Beauty's Castle* (Politis 73)—its vain defence by a princess—is also vaguely Akritic.

Légrand was able to quote a brief fragment, *Akritas built a Castle*, which corresponds to the eighth book of the epic. It is a characteristically eastern ballad, and there are versions in the shorter lines usual in Pontic poetry. Then follows the hero's death (the ballads have nothing to say concerning the death of his mother). It is in two parts or aspects: *The Wrestle with Charon* and *Eudoxia's Death*. The former is a famous piece, and occurs both in Akritic guise and in later generalized forms (Politis 78, Sathas and Légrand, Légrand 214-16, &c.). As the medieval Hercules it befitted Digenis to emulate the greatest achievement of the Greek god. Digenis was victor but soon lay on his bed in agony:

So Digenis does agonize upon his iron bedstead,  
and, books in hand, the doctors take their stations round about him.  
And now uplifts his dying head, and calls for his beloved:  
'Sit here beside me, pretty one, sit here beside me, darling;  
for of the years I've lived on earth the tale is three and thirty,  
but now the messenger has come to reave from me my spirit.'  
He grips her by her two fair hands, a thousand kisses gives her,  
he grips, he squeezes in his arms; she is crushed and suffocated.

So died Eudoxia. In the more generalized versions of the first ballad, current in Europe (Politis 214-16), the youth is a peasant or soldier, who trusts to his strength and is speedily overthrown by Charon. A more poignant counterpart to this scene is *Eugenoula* (Politis 217), who thought because she was young and just married she need not fear death:

'Twas Eugenoula, pretty child, so recently she married,  
she boasted as she went her ways that Charon little feared she;  
so high the roof-tree of her house, so valiant her husband,  
and all her bretheren nine so stout, the vanquishers of castles,  
they every castle overcame till every country trembled.  
But Charon, when he heard that word, so deeply did it grieve him.  
To a black bird he changed his shape, like unto a wild swallow,  
he sent his arrow from his bow against that lady lonely,  
he struck her on her finger fine, upon her fine ring-finger.

Three other ballads remain to be cited in this Akritic group, though they have no connexion with Digenis. They are *Tsamados and his Son*, *The Bridge of Arta* and *The Dead Brother's Return* or *Constantine and Arete* (Politis 77, 89, 92). In the first we are told that the brutal Tsamados descended the hill and forced a deadly wrestle upon his son. The legend belongs to the same class as Ulysses and Telegonos, Il'ja and his son, Sohrab and Rustum, and Hildebrand; it stands closest to the Russian version inasmuch as it condemns the father for a tragic situation generally regarded as caused by blind fate. The second legend was first told concerning the bridge of Adana, in Asia Minor, and only at some later date transferred to Arta in Acarnania. It is a masonic legend. The bridge will not stand, however the builders toil, until the master-builder's wife is enclosed in it alive. The oldest form of this ballad is Cappadocian, but the best development is in the Rumanian *Master Manole or the building of Argeş*, where it is connected with the name of a seventeenth-century Greek architect and a Rumanian shrine of much earlier date. The Rumanian version is superior, because it conveys supremely the sense of helplessness in the face of fate; no prayers or entreaties, not even rain and storm, will prevent the devoted girl from advancing to her doom. The third is a powerful ballad, which has spread as far as the gypsies of Hungary in one direction and England in the other (*The Suffolk Miracle*). Arete was an only sister of nine brothers. When a wooer came from a far country, her mother was unwilling to let her go, and only consented when Constantine promised to bring her back when needed, at all costs. Plague swept away the nine brothers and left the mother sick to death. Constantine rose from his tomb, compelled by his oath, and rode to seek his sister; he brought her back, and after so tremendous an experience both she and her mother fell dead. The odour of death rests on all the poem; the

listener sympathizes anxiously with the girl's restless inquiries, which her dead brother does so little to calm and satisfy:

Along the roads as they passed by the little birds were twittering,  
but twittered not with voice of birds, nor yet like unto swallows,  
but twittered they and spoke in words as men do speak together:  
'Now does she know, the pretty maid, that a dead man conducteth?'  
'But do you hear, my Constantine, what things the birds are saying?'  
'Just birds, so let them twitter on; mere birds, so let them chatter.'  
And further, as they went their way, yet other birds addressed them:  
'Surely it is a crime, a wrong, a strange and mighty wonder,  
that living men should go their ways in company with dead ones!'  
'But do you hear, my Constantine, what things the birds are saying?  
how living men do go their ways in company with dead ones?'  
'Tis April now and so they talk; 'tis May, and nests a-building.'  
'I fear me greatly, brother mine, with unguents you're anointed.'  
'Nay yester even as I went into St. George's temple,  
the reverend father sprinkled me with overflowing unguent.'  
And on they passed and on they went and other birds addressed them:  
'Now all the world is gone awry, and 'tis a mighty wonder,  
that such a pretty maid should be she whom the dead conducteth.'<sup>1</sup>

Such ballads are Akritic because they go back to the Akritic age, which is the oldest stratum of European balladry: an age when the Greek frontier was on the Euphrates and the Saracens were their enemies, before the Seljuqid Turks have appeared. They are Cappadocian, because found in that province, or Paphlagonian, as Arethas preferred to say, or Pontic. Removed so far from European Greece they escaped the eyes of the first collectors, who found only the later klephtic ballads of the seventeenth century and onwards; and they have only in our own day been brought within the easy reach of scholars, thanks to the Greek migrations which accompanied the triumphal advance of Kemal Atatürk. Old modes of music and unexplored variations of the words enchant the collectors, who are actively gathering the remains of this ancient poetry in the Greece of to-day.

The Akritic ballads are separated from the klephtic by the depth of the Turkish invasions and the breadth of Byzantine literature. The Greek capital was hardly favourable soil for the growth of balladry. Peculiarly literate, the flood of classical manuscripts which fecundated the Renaissance in Italy represented but a back-

<sup>1</sup> J. E. Flecker's *Bryan of Brittany* is a beautiful adaptation of this ballad in the English style.



wash of those the Greeks habitually enjoyed. The political factions, it is true, required verses for their own purposes, but such were rather vulgar than traditional. It was probably in the capital more than elsewhere, however, that the new accentual prosody arose, and in particular the 'politic' metre. This metre might be represented by the line

The King was in his counting house, counting out his money.

The line is crudely garrulous, but the rhythm is easy and lends itself to improvisation. Its emergence is not easily explained. The iambic tetrameter catalectic, scanned by quantity, was less used by the ancients than many other verse forms, so that its sudden rise to popularity is surprising. The passage from quantity to stress would not depend on the rare cases in which the ancient accent coincided with the quantities, but no other intermediate stages have been observed. In the Comnenian age we know that the metre was used for lampoons circulating in the streets of the capital, but its chief employment was for chronicles and panegyrics, for which it was suited by reason of its colloquial ease. This was not the only metre of the Greek ballad-mongers. An accentual iambic trimeter appears in many; dimeters and many other verse forms were at the disposal of song-writers in a more lyrical vein. All this poetry is unrhymed, but rhyme is occasionally encountered in late work from the eighteenth century and after, probably due to Venetian teaching.

A four-line fragment survives to satirize the flight of Alexios Comnenus in 1081, and six lines of politic verse refer to some siege of Adrianople (Politis 1):

The Anatolian nightingales and all the birds of Westland,  
they cry at dawn, they cry at eve, they clamour in the noontide,  
they cry for Adrianopolis, that is so sorely battered,  
that enemies assaulted her during three holy feast-days:  
upon the day of Jesu's birth, and thence unto Palm Sunday,  
and bright Easter Sunday too, when Christ was resurrected.

This is the oldest ballad of European Greece, so far as we know, though it is little more than a cry of distress. The occasion is uncertain. The Bulgarians thrust their forces into the city in the Easter of 1205; in 1353 and 1361 the city fell before the Turks, but the precise days are unknown. The consensus of critical opinion is that the ballad refers to Amurath's siege of 1361. The great

disasters of the fifteenth century are recorded in laments of this sort: the fall of Constantinople in 1453 is mirrored in *Constantine Dragazes' Death*, which depicts his heroic despair, and in a ballad on the saving of the relics in St. Sophia (Politis 2). The fall of Trebizond and Poliokastro in 1461, and the heroic defence of Kordyle by a woman, follow hard upon these pieces. The conquest of Greece was not completed until a century later. Skanderbeg held out in Epirus and Albania, and a ballad speaks of a general Epirot rising against the Turks in the decade following 1565. The period was brought to an end by the battle of Lepanto in 1571. *The Sea-fight and the Slave* speaks of Don John's triumph (calling him *Regas*) and the death of Ali Pasha. The battle saved the western Mediterranean lands from Turkish invasion, but the attempt to carry the war into the eastern basin resulted in a stalemate. The hapless Greeks were abandoned by the westerners, and the Turks had leisure to devour them.

The Greek resistance, no longer national but personal and local, was the work of Epirot klephts. The word means no more than 'robber', so low had freedom sunk. The importance of the klephtic ballads as the nurse of Greek independence cannot be over-estimated. Their poetical worth is often slight. They were little more than bulletins giving news of the revolt of some leader, a successful raid, a lucky escape, and the inevitable capture and death of the klepht. But so long as such news circulated, Greeks could not forget that their mountains at least were free. The oldest piece of klephtic verse is probably that which celebrates Malamos, who revolted at the instigation of the Venetians in 1585. In the seventeenth century klephtic ballads remain rare: one hears of a certain Bishop Serapheim of Phanari, who was unjustly executed in 1612 on suspicion of complicity with the insurgents, and of Nikolas Tsouvaras, who made an attack on Louro in 1672 and carried off the local commander. From the last quarter of the century the succession of klephtic ballads extends without interruption down to the War of Independence, and we hear the names of Metsoïsos, old Mpoukovalas, Demakes, Liazes, Ntritzas, Tsoulkas, young Mpoukovalas, Milionis, Kolokotronis, Botzaris, and many others.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close the klephtic resistance took more ambitious forms. The decadence of the Sublime Porte was evident; the rise of Russia brought a new great power into the

eastern Mediterranean. Relying on the promised aid of Catherine II, a certain Daskaloïannes (Master John) raised a revolt in Crete in 1770; but he was deceived in his hopes, taken and put to death. In the ballad the Turks taunt him with his Greek patriotism. The operations on both sides became more elaborate as the turn of the century approached. Ali Pasha of Iannina, himself of klephtic descent, undertook punitive expeditions at the head of Turkish regulars and Albanian spahis, and the resulting conflict could be deemed a war (the Souliot War). He was surprised and defeated by Botzaris in the defiles near Souli on 20 July 1792, and the Greek ballad is a shout of triumph:

Then Botzaris upraised his voice, his right hand shook his falchion:  
 'Stay, Pasha, stay; why sneak away? why flee among the fleetest?

Come, turn again into our town, turn back to empty Kiapha,  
 and set you up your royal throne, and make yourself a sultan!

(Politis 5.)

There is a longer ballad on the defence of Missolonghi and others follow down to the arrival of King Otho and the Treaty of Berlin. New ballads have arisen at even later dates in the islands, especially in Crete. The Cretan *Alidakis* relates his feud with the local Turkish ruler in some thousand lines of vigorous narrative, but pedestrian verse.

The klephtic cycles were once quoted for the light they might throw on the composition of the *Iliad*, based on hypothetical ballads of Troy. Their irrelevance in this respect is now generally recognized, and they have lost caste in the eyes of scholars because of their patent modernity. Yet they have their niche in ballad history. They fanned the flicker of national spirit in the most desperate age. They link up with the haiduk ballads of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Rumania, both in themes and in sites. Those of Rumania derive from Serbo-Bulgar models, and the best of these belong to the western mountains which extend southward into Epirus, the favourite haunt of the Greek klephts. On the Albanian frontier, Greeks, Slavs, and Albanians mingled in feud or amity. Metsoïsos, Ali Pasha's great-grandfather, revolted in 1690 with three thousand klephts and Albanians; his ballad is Greek, but it is popular in Albania. A Greek ballad commemorates the prowess of the Albanian Liazes, who led a mixed company of Bulgarians, Albanians, and Vlachs into Macedonia, Thessaly, and Epirus. On the other side, the Turks relied on Albanian renegades to crush the

revolted Greeks. It is not surprising, therefore, that the klephtic and haiduk ballads of all the Balkan peoples should form virtually one corpus, uniform in inspiration, episodes, and style. Constituting a homogeneous mass of verse, it is they that give each of these countries a 'romancero'.

Their literary interest, however, lies not so often in datable bulletins as in those of a more general sort which describe the vicissitudes of an outlaw's life. It is a defiant and a romantic pose:

O let the plutocrat have gold, the poor man have good humour,  
let others praise the pasha's state, let others praise the vizier;  
but I will only praise the sword that slaughters Turkish foemen,  
for youthful courage has its boast, the klepht his reputation.

(Politis 20.)

The klepht is free from every tie. Only Nature bounds his freedom, since he can roam the mountains from May to August, but must descend to the plains when the snows creep down the flanks of Olympus and Kissabos, risking death or torture. Nature sympathizes with the klepht, encourages his revolt, and mourns his death:

Olympus—see!—and Kissabos, two mountains in a quarrel:  
which shall pour down the heavy rain, which shall pour down the  
snowstorm.

'Twas Kissabos that sent the rain, Olympus sent the snowstorm.  
Olympus turned his mighty head, to Kissabos thus spake he:  
'Nay, scold me not, Sir Kissabos, by feet of Turks betrampled,  
for I am Olympus full of years, in all the world renowned,  
and forty-two my summits are, and sixty-two my fountains;  
and on each peak a banner free, 'neath every branch an outlaw.'

(Politis 23.)

Not only the hills are at one with the klephts, but so are all free and noble birds and beasts.

There was an eagle seen afar, there was an eagle youthful,  
who was a klepht. Three partridges foretell his chances, and three clouds rest on Karpenisi for his sake. Devices of this kind become monotonous by repetition, but they must have been invented by some one with an eye for nature, and they sometimes appear in entirely adequate contexts. So we see the klepht at ease under his plane tree. We are present at rapid night-marches and halts during the day, at careless feastings, dances, and wrestling-bouts. The approach of bitter winter is only less awesome than the oncoming

of helpless old age. The klepht must say farewell to the mountains; the trees, twigs, springs, and dens mourn for the captured outlaw, and he dies in the midst of cruel enemies or on a naked hillside. The happiest death was that which came sword in hand; and lest dishonour should come even after death, klepht and Turk struggled over the corpses in the Homeric fashion:

Androutsos cried a bitter cry, a bitter cry, empoisoned:

'Come, children, grip your trusty blades, and cast away your muskets, lest Turkish dogs should carry off the head of our own Vlachos, an outlaw old and gray was he, among the klephts a captain.'

(Politis 52.)

The Akritic and klephtic poems embrace all the historical element in Greek 'tragoudia', together with fictions and occupational songs of a certain kind. There remain for discussion the adventure ballads of a more modern type and other occupational or occasional ditties. Some of these show foreign influence. *Maurianos' Sister* (Politis 81) belongs to the cycle of *Marianson's Rings* and the betrayal of Imogen. The Greek text shows a number of latinisms (mandata, foro, furca, kadena) which, though common enough, are pointers towards the Italian origin of the ballad. In handling the story the Greek ballad stands closer to *The Two Knights* (Child 268) than to any other version. The Sicilian legend of Cola Pesce appears in Greek dress as *The Diver* (Politis 90); and *The Infanticide* (Politis 91) is a horrid tale of adultery and murder which is current in Sicily (Pitré 910), but might as well be Greek as Sicilian. The process of commingling Italian and Greek ballads is most thoroughly carried out in the Greek-speaking townships of Southern Italy. Greek 'tragoudia' are current there and as far west as Corsica,<sup>1</sup> but the majority of pieces are improvisations in the South Italian style of 'canziuni' and 'ciuri', though in the Greek language. One may follow more exactly the course taken by *The Girl who went to War*. It is a folk-song of Venice, as well as other parts of Italy, and crossed with Venetians to Dalmatia. There it was taken up by the Yugoslavs, who fashioned a ballad of *Old Čeivan's Daughter*, and by the Greeks, who formed the folk-tale of *The Princess who went to War*. The Albanian *Silver-tooth*<sup>2</sup> is a

<sup>1</sup> Professor W. Starkie has encountered Greek gipsies who relate the *Bridge of Arta* legend in Morocco. The singer, however, was a Rumanian by birth, and her source seems to have been the Rumanian ballad of *Master Manole*.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. von Hahn, *Greichische und albanesische Märchen*, Leipzig, 1864, 10 (Greek), 101 (Albanian); cf. A. Dozon, *Contes albanais*, Paris, 1881, No. 14.

further development of the same story in the same geographical area.

On the other hand, we have to allow for the force of expansion of the Greek inventions. In the Balkan peninsula the province of Macedonia has especial significance as the meeting-place of Greeks, Bulgars, Serbs, Albanians, and Vlachs. It was also the region in which the war-like descendants of the Paulicians were settled by medieval emperors after the overthrow of their power in distant Cappadocia. The Cappadocian ballad of *The Bridge of Arta*, once located in Macedonia, begat the Rumanian ballad of *Master Manole* at some date after the end of the third quarter of the seventeenth century. The essential difference in this version is that the identity of the victim is not revealed, but left to chance. The name Manole first appears in Greek Macedonian ballads. Mano or Manoil is the hero of Bulgarian ballads (Miladinov 424) from the Rumanian. In Serbia the choice of victim was left to fate by three brothers, but two of them conspired to keep their wives from coming (*The Founding of Skadar*, Karadžić, ii. 25), which shows the influence of the Rumano-Bulgar version; and the Serbian plot appears in the Albanian *Bridge of Dibra* (Dozon, *Contes albanais*, Supplément: 'Le Pont du Renard à Dibra'). On the other hand, *Constantine and Arete* seems to have been borrowed by Rumanians, Bulgars, Serbs, and Albanians separately; they do not pass on names or incidents from one to the other. In *Bridesmaid into Bride* (Politis 83) we have a ballad which has effected a lodgement in the Spanish *Romancero*.<sup>1</sup> It is encountered in Catalonia earlier than in Castile; so that it is relevant to remember that the Catalans of the Middle Ages lived beside the Greeks in Corsica, Sicily, and Southern Italy, and they also for a while—though probably too early for the borrowing of this ballad—ruled the principality of the Morea. The main feature of this ballad is the dazzling description of the bridesmaid's beauty:

The chapel looked upon her face, from end to end it shivered.

The priest he looked and lost his place, gaped open-mouthed the deacon,

fumbled the psaltery the choir, the choir and the precentors.

But when the bridegroom saw that maid, he fell to earth a-swooning;  
said: 'Priest, ring backwards all the bells, begin again the singing,  
take back again the marriage-crown, to set it on the bridesmaid.'

Other contacts between Greece and the west include *The*

<sup>1</sup> See my article on 'La Dama de Aragón' in *Hispanic Review*, vi, 1938.

*Lover's Return* (Politis 84) and the tests he makes of his wife's fidelity, and *The Luckless Marriage* (Arabantinos 471), which is a distant offshoot of *Elveskud*. From the Ukraine in the eighteenth century came a version of Mazeppa's ride entitled by Legrand *The Husband's Vengeance*. A ballad of *Captain Manetas*, in 1780, describes how he went to the Black Sea ports on hearing a report that his wife was unfaithful, and how he sent back orders for her murder. The ballad is evidence of Greek contact with the Ukraine; at the same time it betrays the influence of foreign (Italian) aesthetic preferences, since it is a 'rima' in twelve-syllable couplets.

The greater number of the 'tragoudia' have no obvious attachments outside Greece. They cover the usual grounds of folk-poetry: love, tragedy, crime, adventure. There is tripping of feet in the charming *Zerbopoula* (Politis 99), or *Syropoula*, as others say. A king comes unexpectedly upon a round of dancing girls, and he loses his heart to the fairest of them:

The golden damsels danced before, the brown girls danced behind  
them,

and in the midmost of them all, fair Zerbopoula tripped it.

They danced the 'choros', which is the Bulgarian 'horo', the Rumanian 'hora', and the Serbian 'kolo'. The Greek ancestry of all these dances is evident in the words; but it is also possible that the 'choros' is the source of the old French 'carole', and so of carols and danced ballads. The simple movements are carried out by women, who leave to men feats of virtuosity. In Greece the dance does not lead to a distinction of kinds in folk-poetry, as it does in the opposition of women's songs to men's songs in Yugoslavia; but it does give us yet another glimpse of the part women seemed to have played in the restoration of love-poetry to Europe.

The Greek love-poems are very numerous, and they indulge in pretty fancies. They speak of trees that flourish just so long as lovers remain faithful to the vows spoken under their branches. A handkerchief or a mirror is a girl's counsellor and confidant. Lovers' secrets are never inviolate, but the star tells the sun, the sun tells the sea, the sea tells the oar, the oar the sailor, and the sailor all the world. There are metaphors from fowling and hunting applied to the sport of love. Lovers are tested: they are sent down wells to get a ring or must lift a marble block in a garden. The lover pursues his girl through many transformations of shape. Then follow the changes of fortune: quarrels, desertion, the over-

bold suitor who lives to repent his rashness. The deserted girl sings a magic song that bursts bridges and drowns ships at sea; she rouses the elemental from his bed in the river, and he complains that he can find no peace. The supernatural is less developed in the 'tragoudia' than in prose folk-tales. One encounters elementals, dragons, and charontes in the ballads, but in the folk-tales also sirens, fates, lamiae, and nereids. The nereids are not restricted to the waves, but live in hills and woods, and in their characteristics resemble the Serbian 'vile' and the Bulgarian 'samodive'. The shining loveliness of Helen still stops men's hearts on that Asian shore; for when *Emirissa* (Politis 97) went down to bathe

the shore flashed light, it lightened on the beaches.

There are the usual reproaches and tragedies, as when the tender Theonitza dies of love.

Almost equally numerous are the dirges (*moirologiai*). They are sung by professional women, and are adapted to typical occasions; the individual case they fit more or less appositely. The ballad of *Kyr Borias* (Politis 98) is used for deaths by shipwreck, though it is a narrative of a particular tragedy caused by a miscreant Jew. Few dirges are so specific. They employ pathetic comparisons: death is a bitter potion, the house of mourning lies under a cloud, the earth has a ravening maw, death is a long journey without return, the garden is withered, the agonizing soul is entreated to wait at least till summer come. These dirges pass easily into the songs about Charon. Charon has been multiplied, like Cupid: one encounters Charontes and even a Charontissa. The story of Admetus undoubtedly lingered among Greek folk-tales, and in the wrestle of Digenis with death it took a new life. Young shepherds, klephts, or soldiers suddenly encounter death, and the pretty rich girl, newly betrothed, does not escape her doom. Death has his feast, and the girl who dies may still feel keenly the forgetfulness of those who live.

Both the love-songs and the dirges are reduced to their simplest form, and become distichs. These distichs are the final stage of Greek folk-poetry; for when the power of composition is lost, as in the Dodecanese, only distichs continue to appear. There is thus a curious parallelism between the 'tragoudia' and the history of classical Greek poetry. Of classical verse the epigram was the



last to be cultivated with grace and freshness. The traditional distichs have not the formal perfection of the best epigrams, but they maintain a level much above the worst. They slip easily over the tongue, since their rhythms are those of normal speech. They are unemphatic, direct, and full of poignancy or charm. Were we to count them not by lines but by hemistichs, they would resemble the quatrains of modern Portugal and Latvia, which are also reductions of older, more varied verse types.

There are ballads of crime—typical crimes, rather than particular ones. The *Evil Wife* (Politis 80) relates how one brother slew another to take his wife, but, overcome by remorse, slew her too. An evil mother drives her son into exile, and an evil step-mother bewitches her children. The special motifs of piracy and brigandage are a sauce for old situations: a girl proves to be her captor's sister (Politis 86), and a count is forced by misery to sell his wife to one who proves to be his brother (Politis 86 B). A girl offers a kiss for her lover's ransom, but is refused; the *Emirissa* is seized by pirates when bathing; the captive women of Chios lament, and so do Greek prisoners in the Barbary states and a galley-slave in a Turkish ship at Lepanto. There are stirring fights between three monks and a Turkish privateer, or between Tsoulakis and a pirate. In one poem the Greeks go down defiantly resisting, in another it is the ship that will not yield to a storm. The best of these sea-pictures—a special merit of Greek poetry—is the ballad of *Kyr Borias*. A storm overtook his vessel, on which was a Turk and a Jew. The Turk was ordered to pray in his own fashion, the Jew to recant. So the wind abated. But the Jew changed his mind again, blasphemed Christ, and roused the wind afresh so that the ship was lost.

To complete the picture of Greek folk-verse, we find many types that are not strictly relevant to this work. They serve to mark the unity of Balkan folk-song, for they are generally found in other lands in much the same form. The stages of funerals are signalized by special dirges, and there are songs for each moment of the bridal feast: betrothal, the bridegroom's pride, stuffing the beds on a Saturday, riddling, leading the bride, reaching the new home, scattering bramble-straw and ivy. So also there are the stated seasons of the year: Noels or 'kalanda', Palm-tide songs or 'baïtika', with appropriate compliments for master and mistress, priest and heir. Shepherds and other workers have their songs,

and gnomic pieces are storehouses of rustic prudence. The *Mill Song* (Politis 234) must be one of the oldest in type, since Herodotus speaks of one sung in his day. The modern *Swallow Song* has only one line in common with that used by children in ancient Athens; it is used to greet the spring, and enumerates the signs of the opening year in a manner like that of the Old French May-songs, for which there are several other parallels. Songs of exile are a peculiarly Balkan genre. In such sterile lands young men are compelled to seek work far from their mountain homes; their regrets are embodied in a whole class of lyrical ballads.

## 2. *Yugoslavia, Bulgaria*

The Serbs and Croats occupy the ridge of the Dinaric Alps which separates the Dalmatian coast from the interior valleys of the Save, Morava, and Vardar. All this land is theirs; consequently theirs is the watershed between Greek and Latin civilization together with the outposts of each. Farther to the east, Bulgarians, speaking an almost identical language, are wholly Balkan. To the north the Yugoslavs maintain contact with the outposts of Germanic culture, which is, in its best features, an offshoot of the Latin. Illyricum and Pannonia belonged, under Diocletian's rule, to the Western Empire; but with the fall of Rome their fortunes were identified with the East. The infiltration of the Slavonic tribes impressed a new character on this region. Stepan Dušan, in the fourteenth century, extended his short-lived empire in the direction of Bulgaria and Macedonia, while the coastal towns—Ragusa-Dubrovnik, Spalato-Split, Zara, &c.—were falling under the influence of Venice. The Serbs and Bulgars embraced the Greek faith, the Croats the Roman. With the faith went the alphabet, so that two are still current in Yugoslavia. The Croats speak the same language as the Serbs, but on the coast men spoke Dalmatian Romance. They are the 'Latins' of the bride-stealing ballads of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which show how the Christian alliance against the Turks was hampered by the mutual suspicions of head-strong mountaineers and crafty townsmen. The sailors of both shores of the Adriatic lived the same life and understood each other well, but an abrupt change of ideals and manners occurred in the course of the five-thousand-foot climb of the Montenegrin wall.

Thus Yugoslavia is a land of transition from one civilization to

another, and it has, like other regions of the same kind, developed a sturdily independent culture of its own. This culture is expressed supremely in its ballads. With the fall of the medieval empire and the desperate struggle which continued through five centuries, there was no time to devote to a sheltered written literature. Inspiration was immediate and local; a form of verse was found which proved to be a satisfactory vehicle for hasty improvisations. The art was rude and simple, but it was cultivated by the best minds of the nation. The principle of hardy resistance was embodied in the petty Montenegrin chieftains or in the outlaws who held the mountain defiles; beside the chief stood the poet, often a blind fiddler on a single string, able and ready to put deeds into words, to praise a hero, condemn a traitor, and lament a disaster. The 'guslar' was all the history and posterity that his leaders could expect. His gift of oral traditional expression was so highly cultivated that, in our own time, deputies of parliament have had a sufficient store of tags to put a whole debate into extempore verse. But his gift was better applied than in this modern instance, and the fame of those he praised 'volitabat per ora virum'. We have the less reason, therefore, to be surprised at the singular nobility of Serbian verse. It is of ballad simplicity, but of epic seriousness; critics find it hard to know to which branch it belongs. There is a sad, simple, and beautiful grandeur in the cycle of Kosovo which causes that group of poems to stand out as a supreme moment of European balladry. If the same height is not held by those of Marko Kraljević, and if there is a perceptible descent into savagery in the haiduk pieces, the Serbian ballads are seldom cheap and vulgar in their most degenerate epoch. In those of Bulgaria, which are all recent, crime and superstition occupy a greater place, and prosy language is almost universal. The neck of the Bulgar was immediately under the heel of the Turk, and his despair is not so much expressed in his ballads as to be inferred from their meagre aspirations. There are Serbian ballads of the same kind; but the survival of fierce liberty in the Montenegrin mountains and some divine instinct keeps old tags vivid and old emotions still keen.<sup>1</sup>

The Serbian music is old Byzantine.<sup>2</sup> An extremely simple

<sup>1</sup> See Note P, p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> W. Wunsch, *Heldensänger in Südosteuropa*, Leipzig, 1937. Bulgarian music is treated by C. Obreschkoff in *Das bulgarische Volkslied*, Bern-Leipzig, 1937. General questions of performance are noticed in W. Wunsch, *op. cit.*, and in M. Murko, *La Poésie populaire épique en Yougoslavie au début du xx<sup>e</sup> siècle*,

monotonous chant is heard in the men's songs of the whole mountainous region. The range of notes is narrow, and their intervals not those of the west. In Bulgaria a new, more ornamented style occurs, more akin to the modern Greek ballad chant. There are the characteristic irregular intervals, and quarter-tones and third-tones as well as semitones. But it is particularly in flourishes and rapid improvisations that the two styles differ. They are found together in the valleys of the Serbian rivers, especially in the Vardar basin. Two waves of Greek music have followed the same course from east to west, but the second has not reached the limits of the first. The men chant in the high mountains, and reckon to leave singing to the women; to the women belongs also the sole use of the round dance.

This distinction between women's songs (*ženske pesme*) and men's or warriors' songs (*junačke pesme*) is fundamental in Serbian balladry. It was made by V. S. Karadžić, and serves to mark off lyrics from narratives, and love-songs from martial adventures. It is the men's songs that concern us in this study, since they are the ballads which our definition seeks. But the distinction is not absolute: there were love-narratives which Karadžić himself did not know how to classify, and indeed the distinction in some cases is rather by religion than by sex. Bride-stealing is one of the main themes of the men's songs, and is associated with the most august names of Serbian history; but a ballad of bride-stealing is a kind of love-song. The harassed mountaineers could hardly woo in any other form; but the peaceful Yugoslav Moslems—the Omer of the ballads and others like him—could woo and wilt in a more feminine way. Between the men's narratives and the women's lyrics there thus lies a middle region of love-*tales* suited to either sex. None the less, the broad distinction between men's songs and women's holds throughout Yugoslav oral verse, and it justifies the attention given by students of the ballad to the '*junačke pesme*' in isolation.

A very large number of metres are used for women's songs, including the heroic decasyllable of the men. There is a lyric

Paris, 1929. The whole social background is etched by M. Braun, '*Zur Frage des Heldenliedes bei den Serbokroaten*', and M. Braun and T. Frings in '*Heldenlied*', both articles published in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, lix, 1935. F. Saran discusses the prosody of Serbian verse in *Zur Metrik des epischen Verses der Serben*, Leipzig, 1934, referring to the decasyllable only.

decasyllable, with caesura after the fifth syllable, and the use of the variety with pause after the fourth is associated, even in women's songs, with narrative. The men's songs use the heroic decasyllable with pause after the fourth syllable. Under more modern and less lofty conditions the octosyllable is found, especially in Bulgarian verse; and there are some seventy-six surviving samples of an irregular metre older than the heroic line. This older verse is called 'bugarštica'. The word must be connected with 'Bugar' 'Bulgarian'; but one is deterred from associating the thing with Bulgaria, both because of the derivative character of Bulgarian folk-poetry as we now have it, and because the irregular lines surviving in Bulgarian have quite a different character. The second half of a 'bugarštica' line shows a fairly regular succession of trochees:

... hero Marko Kraljevicu  
... and his brother Andrijašu  
... glittering sabre bright and golden.

These are the second halves of trochaic tetrameters, though they are not unlike the second halves of 'politic' lines also. It is to the first hemistich that no exact rule was applied.

But indeed they two were not, oh my friends, a pair of paupers,  
for of twain the one was hero Marko Kraljeviću,  
hero Marko Kraljeviću, and his brother Andrijašu,  
*warriors so young!* (Durić iv. i. 1.)

If we allow the name to influence our hypotheses, we must grant that a Bulgar empire arose before the Serbian, and in its striving for culture laid itself open to Byzantine influences. The Bulgarians may have transmitted to the Serbs some notion of the Greek trochaic tetrameter (with a more precise conception of the second hemistich than of the first); or they may have passed on the politic metre of the capital, adapting it to the trochaic rhythm, as characteristic of their language as is the iambic of Greek. In any case, this oldest of Yugoslav traditional metres witnesses by its name to its eastern origin; and other eastern characteristics of Serbian verse are the absence of rhyme, the use of certain set phrases, the negative comparisons, the speaking birds, and many leading motifs.

The 'bugarštice' are found in documents of the sixteenth century, but from the seventeenth and onwards the heroic decasyllable prevails. It may have been used to renovate lost 'bugarštice'. On

the other hand it may also be as old as the men's songs themselves, since (though manuscript evidence is wanting) some early prose that incorporates the sense of ballads of Kosovo gives, under reconstruction, heroic decasyllables.<sup>1</sup> The resemblance of a copy of Serbian verse to the old heroic line of the French 'chansons de geste' is striking, both because of the lofty intonation, and because of the marked pause after the fourth syllable:

Rose so early	Maiden of Kosovo,
rose so early	on a Sunday morning,
first arose she	e'er the sun had risen.

The difference is only that the French line is iambic (when it has a demonstrable rhythm), but the Serbian is trochaic. The French decasyllable, however, was converted into the Italian hendecasyllable by the simple expedient of taking the 'feminine' line instead of the 'masculine' as normal, and in folk-verse this hendecasyllable tends to have a fixed pause after the fifth syllable. The Italian line is felt to have a trochaic rhythm. By suppressing the unaccented first syllable, the Serbian decasyllable arises. There seems little reason to doubt the western character of this line, and that it came to Serbia by way of Italy and the Dalmatian towns. It is a path marked down, as we shall see, by the traces of western ballad themes which have penetrated into Yugoslavia and Greece.

One enters the 'junačke pesme' through the magnificent portal of Kosovo. Traces of song can, of course, be followed through allusions to a remote date, and there is even evidence that women's songs—presumably of a lyrical cast—were already sung in approximately the modern manner in the thirteenth century. But it is the men's songs that constitute the true ballads of this region, and their succession opens almost abruptly with the national disaster in 1389. It has been plausibly represented, though it is by no means certain, that one report in verse concerning this battle reached the shores of the Black Sea before the year was out, and was there heard by the deacon Ignatiï and included in his Russian travel diary.<sup>2</sup> In the biography of Tsar Lazar's son by Constantine the Philosopher (writing in 1431-2) we encounter the same religious construction put upon the event as we find in the ballad of *The*

<sup>1</sup> See the essays in reconstruction by M. Braun, *Kosovo*, Leipzig, 1937, pp. 35 and 94.

<sup>2</sup> See M. Braun, *Kosovo*, Leipzig, 1937. The texts are given in Helen Rootham's *Kosovo*, Oxford, 1920, accompanied by an excellent verse translation.

*Fall of the Serbian Kingdom.* A Yugoslav Janissary, Constantine by name, writing in Polish after 1463, follows ballads which he must have heard before his capture by the Turks in 1455; and the text of an anonymous Dalmatian translator into Italian of Doukas's chronicle uses language that may be readily retranslated into Serbian verse. He wrote before the end of the fifteenth century. Before 1600, therefore, this cycle was virtually complete; its most important members must have circulated widely by 1450; and one may belong to the very year of the great disaster.

Serbian balladry thus begins in the form of a news bulletin. The precedent was set not so much by Greek 'tragoudia', though these were already in existence and probably known to some Serbs, but in the political verse of the Greek 'litterati'. They were accustomed to compose panegyrics on events of the day and to circulate information at court; and it was probably at court that the first Serbian narratives arose. Their milieu is courtly; their poise aristocratic. The style of the Kosovo cycle is one fully elaborated; its elaboration presumably occurred at the court of the emperor Stepan Dušan, whose military achievements clamoured for consecration in verse. There is, indeed, a ballad of his marriage (Karadžić, ii. 28), but it has so many inaccuracies that one can hardly accept it as contemporary work. He is said to woo Roxanda, daughter of King Mihail of the Latins. His champion Miloš penetrates the country of the Latins disguised as a 'black Bulgar'. Doubtless there is a reminiscence here of the emperor's Bulgar marriage, confused by memories of Montenegrin alliances with the princelings of Dalmatia. Ballads which profess to refer to the Nemanjid dynasty, of still earlier date, all show signs of late composition or re-editing. The art of poetry may have been elaborated at Stepan Dušan's court upon themes supplied by his dangers and triumphs; but it was only with the disruption of the kingdom that such poems were launched upon oral tradition. The Kosovo ballads had, perhaps, antecedents; but they are unquestionably the oldest surviving narratives. They report an event of breath-taking importance to the Serbian folk. But they also insinuate remoter and immediate causes, interpret character, and view the event 'sub specie aeternitatis'. In the moment of overwhelming disaster they fortify the national spirit. They make it invincible since it is pure spirit, independent of places and persons, of strength or weakness, but living in words and rhythms that could not be

forgotten. It is in these ballads that the Serbian nation truly lives; and the peasant-soldiers who crossed the plain of Kosovo with reverent awe in 1912 were completing a ritual act begun by the self-sacrifice of Tsar Lazar.

The remoter causes of the disaster are stated to have been the treachery of the south Serbian King Vukašin and the Laodiceanism of the northern Tsar Lazar. The ballads are thus originally from North Serbia. Vukašin's treacherous character is seen in *The Founding of Skadar* (Karadžić, ii. 25), which is borrowed from the Greek *Bridge of Arta*, but used to calumniate that king, and again in *Uroš and the Mrnjavčevići* (Karadžić, ii. 33). Marko Kraljević, though son to Vukašin, decides against his claims in competition with the legitimate successor of Stepan Dušan. These ballads are, perhaps, quite recent. Tsar Lazar's fault, as described by *The Founding of Ravanica* (Karadžić, ii. 34, 35) is more venial. He has neglected to build monasteries. When reminded of his fault he is even over-anxious to make amends, but the warning voice tells him it is too late. The immediate cause of the Serbian disaster is, however, the quarrel between the hero Miloš Obilić and the traitor Vuk Branković (Durić, iv. 8, 11). The Tsar insulted the hero and favoured the traitor. In this ballad we are entering the area of songs contemporary with the event. In actual fact Miloš penetrated the Turkish camp before the battle and killed Murad. It was a feat of immense daring; but it was rendered vain by the promptitude with which Bajazet suppressed all news of the disaster, so that the Turks remained undismayed in face of the Serbs. The ballad was presumably composed by some poet bitterly hostile to the powerful family of the Brankovići, who later bore the brunt of Turkish attacks on the Serbian valleys. He insinuates a cause for Miloš's action which may not have been historically true; but the feat itself is historic, and appears in the earliest reports. A ballad of *Queen Milica and Vladeta* (Durić, iv. 7) reinforces this contrast, and one of *Miloš among the Latins* (Karadžić, ii. 36) relates other evidence of his prowess; in a visit to Ragusa he tossed his club over the roof of a church.

The battle is described in *The Fall of the Serbian Kingdom* (Karadžić, ii. 45). Waves of myriads of Turks roll forward, are checked by a hero and a small band, and routed—but the hero also lies dead. The nine sons of Jug Bogdan perish along with their father (there is a ballad entitled *Milica and the Jugovići* which



shows how every one of them refused to blench before his fatal duty), and last of all Tsar Lazar is overwhelmed. The battle is stylized; it is almost a piece of ritual. And rightly so; for the poet has chosen to represent Kosovo as a national expiation. A prophet offers Tsar Lazar the victory upon earth or in heaven, and he chooses the latter. His death is as the Lord appointed, so that the end of the ballad answers to the beginning:

Came a-flying, came a grey-backed falcon,  
from the temple and from Salem's city,  
and he carried in his beak a swallow.  
Nay, 'twas not so, not a grey-backed falcon,  
rather was it the seer, great Elijah;  
and he carried not with him a swallow,  
but a message from God's holy Mother,  
to the Tsar he brought it, to Kosovo,  
placed the message on the Tsar's own knee-cap,  
and the message thus the Tsar bespeaketh:  
'Tsar Lazare, worthiest of people!  
which now would'st thou choose between two kingdoms—  
whether would'st thou have an earthly kingdom,  
or would'st rather win a heavenly kingdom?  
If thou wouldest win an earthly kingdom,  
saddle charger, girth and trappings tighten,  
gird upon thee thy heroic sabre,  
furiously on the Turk make onrush,  
Turkish warriors every one will perish;  
would'st thou rather win a heavenly kingdom,  
consecrate thou a temple in Kosovo,  
whose foundations build thou not of marble,  
silk and scarlet build thou of the purest,  
purify there, order there the army;  
all must perish, perish all thine army;  
in the midmost, 'tis thy doom to perish . . .'

So there perished Serbia's Tsar Lazare,  
and about him perished all his army,  
for their number seven and seventy thousand:  
all was holy, all was honourable,  
all accomplished as the Lord appointed.

It is to this conception of holiness that the later ballad of *The Finding of Tsar Lazar's Head* (Karadžić, ii. 52) corresponds. Its tone is hagiological.

The poets give us glimpses of the tragedy from several stand-points. It is seen most terribly in *The Death of the Jugovići's Mother* (Karadžić, ii. 47), for she perished when a raven brought her the hand of her dearest son, Damjan, together with the news of the ruin of her house.

Then that mother takes Damjane's hand up,  
turns and turns it, turns it o'er and gazes;  
still and softly to the hand she whispers:  
'Hand the dearest, green and lovely apple!  
where begotten, where hast thou been severed!  
There begotten, in my loving bosom,  
there wert severed, on the plain Kosovo!  
Swells with anguish Jugovići's mother,  
swells with anguish, till her frame was shattered,  
for the dear sake of nine Jugovići,  
and the tenth one—agèd Jug-Bogdane.

But there were others of less exalted category, whose sorrow was softened by pathos. Just as the young hero Musić Stepan (Karadžić, ii. 46) perished in a manner more romantic than tragic, so there is a softer side to the grief of *The Maiden of Kosovo* (Karadžić, ii. 50). Early in the morning she rises and goes to the battle-field; she wipes the blood from dead faces and turns over the heaps, till she comes upon her own dead lover. With the discovery the joy is eclipsed from her own young life, and she ends lamenting her doom to barrenness:

Down her white face streams of tears descended,  
homeward goes she to her own white homestead,  
from her white throat wailing like a cuckoo:  
'Who more wretched? O my fate is bitter!  
Wretch, embracing such a fair green pine-tree,  
but in green youth has my pine been withered.'

These ballads do not constitute an epic, though in their uniform dignity they have tempted the skill of modern epic poets.<sup>1</sup> The disaster is never presented as a complex whole. It is glimpsed in sections, as it affects various people: Queen Milica, the mother of the Jugovići, an unnamed girl, Miloš, the Jugovići and Lazar. Yet some strange instinct would seem to have been at work to see that nothing entered the Kosovo cycle but what was worthy of a place

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the *Lazarica ili Boj na Kosovu* of S. J. Stojković, in 24 cantos. It is in places a centon of ballads.

within it. The language is unapproachable, and the phrases have become the resource of all subsequent poets. The ritual solemnity persists in poems on less solemn themes; all Serbian folk-verse makes life a pattern that repeats itself through eternity.

Next to the cycle of Kosovo stands that of the Serbian national hero Marko Kraljević, or Marko the King's Son.<sup>1</sup> The cycle is historical in so far as Marko was indeed a prince of Prilep, a fortress commanding the pass from the Vardar valley to the plains of Monastir in southern Serbia. He seems to have taken part in the battle of Kosovo, but on the Turkish side. The ruin of the old kingdom was largely due to the dissensions of the Serbian despots, and the ballad poets, while condemning Marko's father, Vukašin, on this account, have exonerated the son. His independence had been forfeited by the loss of south Serbia in 1370 as the result of the battle of the Marica; but Marko remained in semi-independence as lord of Prilep. So he is represented in the ballads: he receives orders from the Turks and serves as their vassal, and yet he maintains a solitary personal independence. He is typical of the heroism which was still possible at that date in southern Serbia, and his cycle is opposed to that of Kosovo as southern to northern and semi-independent to unsubdued. He is also a plainsman as opposed to the Montenegrin highlanders, and as such he is as well remembered in Bulgaria as in Serbia. The Miladinov brothers collected twenty-four Bulgarian ballads of Marko Kraljević, but none of Kosovo. As a strictly historical and national group the Kosovo poems have not the power of migration or survival that belongs to the more novelesque Kraljević cycle. They are unrepresented in the Erlangen manuscript, collected by an unknown German in Hercegovina in the eighteenth century, though he heard several relating to Marko Kraljević. It is one of the respects in which the Bulgarian corpus resembles a late stage of Yugoslav balladry.

The cycle is novelesque. In forming the hero's character it seems impossible to doubt that some ballad-poets had in mind the character already assigned by the Greeks to Digenis Akritas. Both are club-heroes, both are solitaires, and both are ambiguously

<sup>1</sup> D. H. Low, *The Ballads of Marko Kraljević*, Cambridge, 1922, contains these poems in translation. An important topic is discussed by M. Budimir in 'Digenis und Marko Kraljević', *Actes du quatrième Congrès internationale des Études byzantines*, 1937.

associated, in a mixture of truce and war, with the Moslem enemy. Both are styled 'the widow's son'. Both die defying the supernatural, since Digenis wrestled with Charon himself, and Marko ascended his last mountain despite the warnings of a 'vila,' while on another occasion he fought against the 'vila' Ravijoila and compelled her to give back the life she had taken from his foster-brother Miloš Obilić. The material of *The Bridge of Arta* is used, as we have seen, to the disadvantage of his father Vukašin. His faithless wife resembles the Greek *Magda* (Erlangen 151). On the other hand, his name could easily be used for legends that had come from the west. He is the hero of one variant of the *Moringer* theme (Đurić, iv. i, 8), which is also the subject of the ballad of *Todor of Pomorje*, outside his cycle. *Marko Kraljević and the royal Delibasha* (Erlangen 139) is a sanguinary derivative of *Marianson's Rings*, and *Marko and Tuka Senković* (Erlangen 151) resembles not only the Greek piece mentioned above, but also the Italian *Avenging Husband*. In *Marko Kraljević and the Arab King's Daughter* (Đurić, iv. ii, 1) we have the old story of the prisoner and the gaoler's daughter; having escaped, like Young Beichan, by her aid, Marko neglected her, and later suffered remorse. A model might have been found in the incident of Haplorrhabdis in the Akritic epos. Owing to the mingling of so many stories, Marko's matrimonial life has become too complicated to unravel. His father's also was not simple; for in *King Vukašin's Marriage* (Karadžić, ii. 24) we are told he seduced the wife of Momčil of Pirlitor and caused her to kill her husband. Rightly inferring that she would in time be equally ready to kill him, Vukašin spurned her, and married the noble Jevrosima, Momčil's sister:

so begat he Andrijas and Marko,  
but was Marko liker to his uncle,  
to his uncle, to the vojvod Momčil.

The old motif of the Minotaur's tribute of damsels is exploited to Marko's advantage in *Marko cancels the Wedding-tribute* (Karadžić 69). As Ogier of Dinamarche saved Gloriande, so Marko saved a sultan's daughter from marriage with a black Arab (Karadžić 65); and like the Ogier of the *Moniage*, he was liberated from prison as being the only champion ready and willing to fight the fierce Musa Arbanasa (Karadžić 66). Probably the best of the Kraljević ballads is *Marko's Ploughing* (Karadžić 72). His mother,

weary of his vagabondage, urges him to follow a useful pursuit. He decides to plough; but ploughs up the public highway and beats the Turks when they protest:

Wine was drinking Kraljeviću Marko,  
with his ancient mother Jevrosima.  
When of drinking both of them were sated,  
Marko's mother thus began her discourse:  
'Oh my sonny, Kraljeviću Marko!  
Make an end, son, of your raids and scuffles,  
for of evil never good ensueth;  
your old mother grievously is troubled  
washing bloody gobbets from your clothing;  
take you rather to your plough and oxen,  
plough and furrow then the plains and ridges;  
you are, sonny, a youngster white and lovely,  
yet you nourish neither self nor mother.'

Then did Marko listen to his mother,  
and betook him to his plough and oxen,  
but he furrowed not the plains and ridges,  
rather ploughed he up the royal highways.  
Thither hurried Turkish janissaries,  
bringing with them three great loads of treasure,  
and admonished Kraljeviću Marko:  
'Come, come, Marko, don't plough up the highways.'  
'Come, come, Turks, trample not my ploughing.'  
'Come, come, Marko, don't plough up the highways.'  
'Come, come, Turks, trample not my ploughing.'  
Now when Marko grievously was troubled,  
Marko lifted high his plough and oxen,  
and he slaughtered Turkish janissaries;  
so he gathered three great loads of treasure,  
brought them homeward to his ancient mother:  
'Here I bring you this day's wage for ploughing.'

The humour is of a broad Slavonic kind, but it is not the huge guffaw of Russia. The Serbian art is one of measure and restraint. As a prodigious ploughman, however, Marko invites comparison with the Russian Mikula, and this is one of the few pieces which seem to link the southern and the eastern Slavs.

Apart from the last ballad of his death, Marko is the centre of a cycle which has not the elevation or seriousness of the Kosovo poems. He is an average Serbian raised to a greater stature. He is a solitary, satisfied with a harsh independence; his family is his

interest, but not clearly his nation. He is generally good-humoured and slow to anger, but he can be abrupt and bloody. He rights wrongs like a Robin Hood, but does no more for those he has saved. He is not exempt from moral and mental weaknesses, which he recognizes without false pride; and his deeds are always greater than his words.

In a long losing battle the fragments of the Serbian kingdoms after Kosovo were defended by many petty despots. There were the Brankovići at Smederevo on the Danube, the Jakšići in Belgrade, and the wild Crnojevići on the Black Mountain. Their lives, as simplified by the ballad poets (their closest retainers), revolved around two moments: marriage (*ženidba*) and death (*smrt*). The marriages follow a fixed patriarchal pattern of bride-stealing. The suitor collects a train of supporters (*kupiti svatove*), to the conventional total of a thousand. Among these are persons deputed to special offices at the ceremony, who are 'ipso facto' officers of his little army. They set out across the great watersheds and descend to the Dalmatian coast. The tricky Latins are frightened at the show of force, and try to get the Serbs to lay their arms aside. They try to get the champions dismissed, on the ground that they are quarrelsome in their cups. If the champions have been dismissed (as in *Dušan's Wedding*) the wooer is only saved from his imprudence by an unexpected succour; if not, the ballad will end with the Serbs cutting their way out of an ambushade (as in *Jurju of Smederevo's Wedding*, i.e. George Branković, d. 1458). Marko and the heroes of Kosovo are given prominent roles in all the early weddings. Then the brides have to be led home. A proxy takes charge, and a gust of air may lift her veil. Then the proxy falls violently in love, and so commits the worst offence known to ballad-poets: the breaking of a foster-brother's fidelity. A ballad of Marko Kraljević has that pattern (Karadžić, ii. 55). What there may be of historical truth in such stories it is scarcely possible to imagine. A modern Montenegrin, if he thinks of singing his prowess as a wooer, will cut his tale to this pattern without reference to the real facts. The only difference is that he may adopt a tone of comic exaggeration.

Heroes die, for the most part, overwhelmed. The ballads of their deaths thus serve to mark the stages of the Turkish advance up the Morava valley; an advance which cut Serbia in two and isolated Montenegro. A brilliant example is *Voivod Prijezda's*

*Death* (Karadžić, ii. 83), which dates from the mid-fifteenth century. The Turk Memed (Muhammad II) orders him to surrender his horse, sword, and wife. He refuses, and a vast Turkish army advances on his castle of Stalać. For three years the invaders are kept at bay. Then one day Lady Jelica sees that the waters of the Morava are running muddy, and she infers that the Turks have mined under the river. They descend to the cellar and see the first Turks arriving. After a fruitless resistance Prijezda kills his horse, shatters his sword, and leaps from his battlements into the river, grasping his lady. Another way of accounting for the Serbian losses has been the invention of an evil queen, namely, Jerina of Smederevo. According to one ballad (Erlangen 18), failing to seduce Damjan Šajnović, she tricked him into killing his young wife. So she destroyed good counsellors and good voivods in the interest of a sultan to whom she had given her young sister in marriage. Her brother was a would-be kidnapper, and Jerina forced his hand on the fiancée of a better man. A third cause of disaster were the quarrels of the Jakšići and other leaders, quarrels which amply account for the fall of Belgrade.

Interesting figures in the background of these poems are the Hungarians John Hunyadi and Matthias Corvinus (1458-90). Already Marko Kraljević has countered with ruthless actions the 'gabs' of the Magyar Philip (Karadžić, ii. 58), and the later Hungarians are treated as uncertain allies. 'Janko of Sibin' and Matthias are regarded with sympathy, and there is a considerable group of folk-songs which mention their capital of Buda with admiration. The friendliness had some interruptions, as in the rivalry which led up to *Voivod Kaica's Death* (Karadžić, ii. 80). On two occasions the Erlangen poems show John Hunyadi in the moment of defeat. *King Matijaš* (Erlangen 75) deals with his elevation to the throne in a romantic manner; and according to *The King of Buda* (Erlangen 73), Matthias was the only survivor of a battle which may have been Mohacs (1526). He was not a king but a 'servant', and he ran to tell the news of the Hungarian king's death to the queen, who promptly married him. In a rather jolly drinking-song, Matthias rebukes Peter of Varadin for his heavy drinking, but Peter retorts that the wine of the tavern is worth all Buda and Pesh:

Then retorted Pete the stroller, lord of Varadin;  
 'Stop your prating, King Matthias, our land's sovereign.

Were you guesting with the landlord in whose inn am I,  
greater wealth and far more ducats would you spend than I;  
all your Pesth and all your Buda would you squander too—  
girls in Pesth are far too pretty . . . a murrain on the crew!

(Erlangen 178.)

With the collapse of resistance in the sixteenth century the free Serbs were restricted to Montenegro, or to small bands of outlaw 'hajduci' (conventionally composed of thirty persons in the ballads) or raiders from the coastal cities (uskoci). Hundreds of ballads speak of the forays and misfortunes of these persons who stand midway between heroism and criminality. A score of names have been handed down to posterity: Ivo of Senj, Janko of Kotor, Stojan Janković, Mihata, Ilija Smiljanić, Milja the Shepherd, Vuk Mandulić, Erko the Latin, and others who occupy many pages of the Erlangen manuscript. The models for such pieces were the existing ballads of bride-stealing and heroic death, imprisonment and escape, skirmishes and feuds, modified by some touches taken from the actual experiences of the outlaws. Highest in esteem was Old Novak. In *Old Novak and Radivoja* (Đurić, vii. 2) we learn how much better the old leaders were than the new. The injustices that drove men into the mountains are illustrated in *Old Novak and Bogoslav* (Đurić, vii. 1). *Novak in Prison* (Erlangen 67) is a ballad built on the old heroic lines. Captured and abused by the sultan, Novak elects to run the gauntlet of the Janissaries as the most heroic mode of facing death; with the aid of a 'vila', his sister, he kills three thousand men, and escapes. The old lion roamed over the Rudnik hills, and was more intimate with nature than with men:

Keen reproaches from Rumanian mountains:  
'Curse thee, curse thee, aged outlaw Novak;  
all our leafage is stripped by hungry eagles,  
all our tree-tops crushed by wing of ravens,  
downward swooping on young warrior corpses.

(Erlangen 96.)

Ivo of Senj's marriage and death were both remarkable. To get him a bride his lieutenant penetrated into Udbinja, the home of his worst enemies, and kidnapped the fair Hajkuna (Đurić, viii. 6); his death occurred in the pursuit aroused by one of his forays (Đurić, viii. 7). What made his exploits the more hazardous was that his opponents were Slavs like himself, especially the doughty Ljubović, and they had the same courage and manner of life. His own he was



ready to stake by attending a Moslem round-dance, and he went through the usual vicissitudes of imprisonment, skirmishing and quarrelling in his cups. Deep drinking led on to 'gabs', and when sober again the heroes found themselves committed in honour to the wildest adventures. So, in *Bojčić Alija and Glumac Asanaga* (Đurić, viii. 8), the Moslem Serbs undertake in their cups a raid on the coastal cities which they have to execute when sober; they ravage the coast successfully, and it is only a wanton crime that brings down vengeance upon them. Formal challenges to single combat are stock themes, and there are lively representations of stratagems. In *Gruica and the Pasha from Zagorje* (Đurić, vii. 3) the conventional thirty outlaws disguise themselves as girls and kill off an amorous pasha with his retinue. Imprisonment and death end the career of many a band; and in such a case silence was the virtue most esteemed (Đurić, vii. 7: *Old Vujadin*). Ingenious or courageous escapes furnished a more congenial theme: Milja the Shepherd got away by a clever ruse, Stojan Janković beguiled the sister of his jailer, and Young Radoica shammed death, not flinching though they laid a snake on his chest and drove nails under his finger-nails; if his eyelid fluttered when Hajkuna danced round at the head of a bevy of pretty girls, that was a weakness Hajkuna could conceal and forgive (Đurić, vii. 8). A certain Vukosav escaped because his fiancée dressed like a Turkish soldier and pretended to bring an order for his release. The free life was hardly less harsh. Juriš of Senj kept his band together after a lean season, and only after hope of profit was abandoned did they strike a rich convoy, and in other ballads we have glimpses of the band dispersed for the winter and dependent on the loyalty of their friends. The adventures of 'uskoci' and 'haiduci' are too numerous to follow in detail; and we need only add that there was at sea a certain Erko the Latin, who was in the habit of shanghaiing hillmen to form crews for his raids against the Italian coasts, and it was in a sea-fight that Djurja Danilić and Šimo the Latin met their end.

There is a short and undistinguished ballad in the Erlangen manuscript (91) on the battle of Belgrade in 1717, the only interest of which is that it forms a Slavic contrast with the German *Prince Eugenius*. With the nineteenth century a more national spirit entered into the war. The ballad-poets continued to organize the Serbian guerrilleros, and in some way they had their finest hero in Kara George. But the time for the best ballads was passed, and

that of the great collector Vuk Stepan Karadžić was mature. It is not so much a loss of invention that one notes—for the devices were always common property—but a kind of ageing and stiffening of the ballad-style, a restriction within limits and a failure to surprise. A certain collection of *Popular Songs concerning the first national Insurrection* (Belgrade, 1914), though adorned with photos of fiercely whiskered bravoos, opens with clichés in almost every poem:

1. In a vision dreamed a pretty maiden . . .
2. God of mercy! What a mighty marvel! . . .
3. Fluttered thither two black-coated ravens . . .
4. Captain Kulin quickly massed his army . . .
5. Wine were drinking three young Serbian voivods . . .
17. Pens a letter a black-visaged Arab . . .
18. Screamed the *vila* high on Rudnik's mountain,  
by the streamlet, slender Jasenica,  
o'er Topola's plain she sent her summons,  
called upon him, Petroviću Djoko . . .

These had been fine things once, but they had lost a good deal of their truth. The full-mouthed phrases could be strung together with too much ease, and they slipped into garrulous and prosaic contexts. Yet this art, though declining, is still, in Montenegro, the chief recreation of a simple, sturdy race, and sets the pattern for their lives.

There are some curious and interesting religious ballads in Yugoslavia, in which the authentic version of the Bible or hagiology has been transformed by a naïve use of the imagination. They are collected in Đurić's first volume, and open the second of Karadžić. Thus, in *Christ's Birth* (Đurić, i. 1), we learn that Mary was a sheep-farmer and John and Simeon were hired men; Jesus is taken, like any Serbian baby, to be baptized at once, and the only difference is that the Jordan and Judæan hills do him prodigious reverence; a Yule feast is ordered when the hired men return. In *Rich Gavan's Lady* (Karadžić, i. 207) the parable of Dives and Lazarus is turned to the disadvantage of Dives' wife. It is a beggars' ballad, along with *Deacon Stephen and two Angels* (Đurić, i. 3). St. Peter's mother has a bad reputation and is sent to hell; and *Fiery Mary* (Đurić, i. 4) saw in hell various sinners, including one who had been a bad daughter, bad wife, and bad mother, and so was altogether bad, like the Samaritan Magdalene of western ballad

tradition. A sinner whose sins excite the sea to a storm in the Erlangen manuscript (190) was doubtless one of Jonah's kinsmen, a cousin of the Russian Sadko and the Scottish Brown Robin (Child 57).

St. Helen is probably the heroine of *Faliëna's Boasts* (Erlangen 42). She boasts that she will accomplish some remarkable feats of magic; so that the tsar sends for her and marries her. Constantine the Great is not in high favour. We are told that he tried to murder a deacon who had imposed a heavy penance, and fire from heaven came and destroyed all but his hand, which had done some deeds of kindness; he was also a destroyer of churches, only to be restrained by the apparition of three great saints. These are Michael, Nicholas, and Elijah—a typically eastern group. A very remarkable ballad is entitled *Diocletian and John the Baptist* (Đurić, i. 8). Diocletian or Dukljan and St. John play a game for which the stakes are an apple and a crown, and the saint loses. He flies to heaven to get permission to swear one false oath; and armed with this permission he returns to his game. He contrives to induce Dukljan to dive for the apple, while he himself steals the crown. He freezes the sea and flies heavenward, but a 'cursed bird' nips his foot as he goes in:

Weeping sorely, John approached his Maker,  
bright the sunshine he restored to heaven.  
deep compassion felt God for the Baptist,  
for the insult foul the tsar had done him.  
Then the Lord God words of comfort uttered:  
'Never fear thou, good and faithful servant!  
Even measure shall I give to others.'  
So it happened: to our God be glory.

There are also ethical ballads which reprove unpopular vices. Sons who expel their mother from home are turned to stone; the archangel reproves Stepan Dušan's pride; a church grows from innocent bones; lightning strikes a Bulgar who has transgressed the law of foster-brotherhood. This relationship is held more binding than kinship. In *The Foundling Simeon* (Đurić, i. 17) we have a variant of the Oedipus story, taken from oral tradition. Mocked by his playmates, the foundling goes to Buda and there wins the love of the queen; but he comes to know she is his mother, and ends his life with a long penance of snakes and water.

The great bulk of the 'junačke pesme' consists of realistic

narratives which have to be classified as in some sense historical, even when they reproduce well-known fables. The class of adventure ballads, without attachment to historical facts, is thus contained chiefly among the 'ženske pesme' of narrative cast. They are also, not infrequently, the work of Moslem 'guslari'. The Moslem Serbs had no struggle for independence to sing; in compensation they were better acquainted with the peripeteias of a civil polity. The metres employed for such narratives are the heroic decasyllable, the octosyllable, occasionally the lyric decasyllable with pause after the fifth syllable, and rarely the trochaic tetrameter.

The ballads show no remembrance of the greater figures of Slavonic mythology, and, with regard to the lesser daemons, the Yugoslavs seem to possess a less fertile imagination than the Bulgarians. The sun and moon are actors in their narratives; they know 'vile' and 'samovile' who live in the hills and fountains, dragons and snakes, and the use of magic. A single apparition of a ghost is due to a Greek model: *Brother and Sister* (Karadžić, ii. 8), like the Bulgarian *Lazar and Petkana* (Miladinov 100), is a version of *Constantine and Arete* or the dead brother's return. The 'vile' are not always harmful. One, who is also the Morning Star, makes a plain girl beautiful and becomes her foster-sister. But generally they are mischievous. A girl should not bathe in a fountain if she knows a 'vila' is there; a youth perishes in the elemental's arms on their wedding night; and they are wont to spirit away husbands. In *The fiery Dragon's Love* (Karadžić, i. 239) it is the girl who is spirited away to the banks of the Danube; but she refuses help to come home. The ballad is from Dubrovnik. One works magic by means of flowers and scripts dropped into fire; the effects are various, but one of the most malevolent, as in Scandinavia, is to defer a pregnant woman's delivery. Particularly attractive are the ballads of sun and moon, which form a small cycle. *The Sun and Moon woo a Maiden* (Karadžić, i. 229) and *The bright Moon's Wedding* (Karadžić, i. 230, 231) remind us of the Esthonian and Lithuanian pieces, though they are quite independent. The maiden prefers the Moon, with so many stars for relatives, to the solitary and fiery Sun; in the other it is the Day Star which marries the Moon. The Sun has a sister, whom it is dangerous to woo; one tsar did so, but was glad to release her with gifts; a pasha tried to capture her, but she hurled three apples and three thunderbolts and destroyed all his forces (Karadžić, i. 233, 232). It is presum-

ably this lady who is the heroine of *The Tsar and the Maiden* (Karadžić, i. 234). The maiden is determined not to spin or embroider, but to build a church. The sultan tries to beguile her by messages, and then sends a vast army of Arabs, Tatars, and Janissaries; but he is defeated, captured, blinded, and forced to wander over the mountains like a wild bird.

The Bulgarian songs, if my authorities are truly representative in this matter, display a more lively interest in the lesser supernatural. The Miladinov brothers reproduce twenty-six ballads of this sort, and Dozon has a minimum of sixteen. To the 'vile' correspond the Bulgarian 'samodive'. A 'juda' is a 'samodiva', but with a New Testament name. There are also Lamias, dragons, Charontes, Fates, a Pest, snakes, dragons, the Sun and Moon, an unchristian God, and talking birds and animals of all sorts. The bold youth defies the 'samodive' to a contest on the flute, tricks them by enchantments, and steals their magic clothing. The last is an important point; the clothes may be stolen while the elemental is bathing; she will then be fully domesticated and bear children, but only so long as the clothes are kept from her. The Sun marries human girls. In *Grozdanka* (Dozon 13) we encounter the widespread story of Dummy. *Grozdanka* is virtuous. For nine years she keeps the silence befitting a young bride, to the great annoyance of the Sun, who is about to take another bride when she speaks and shames the pert new fiancée. In a Greek folk-tale this motif is united with that of *The Girl who went to War*, to make a double plot. The Christian supernatural mingles with the pagan. It was the curiosity of St. John the Baptist which gave one 'samodiva' the chance of recovering her clothes and escaping. Then there are magic and transformations. A snake may come from a magic flute and bite the player; a girl may challenge a nightingale in song as well as a 'samodiva'. To escape his mother's reproaches a boy would like to become an eagle and fly to Malamka's garden; two lovers would like to become forest trees, so as to be sawn into planks for one bed. The fountain is the rendezvous, and a ring and girdle are guardians of virginity. Curses are a wasting sorrow to many: to the girl who is doomed to be infertile till fishes sing, and one who falls ill for nine years, to the husband who has no children by his wife, and to Koičo who was married for only two days.

The numerous lovers' ballads shade off imperceptibly into true lyrics. This is especially so in ballads of momentary situations,

such as the first meeting and the incidents of courtship. In *A Lover's Wreath* (Karadžić, i. 334) we learn merely that a girl gave her wreath to a boy, and he went to arrange the wedding. There are some interesting tests for lovers: a contest of reaping, swimming a river, or a mountain scramble (Karadžić, i. 252, 738, 730). The Yugoslav form of the ballad which shows how much better is kind than kin is entitled *Pavle Zećanin* (Karadžić, i. 289). Pavle finds a Turkish woman's pearl necklace and hides it in his bosom. He returns home and says there is a snake there. His family refuse one by one to take it out, and only his fiancée dares. One young man goes through the well-known diving test, and another has to get things that are impossible. In *Sister tests Brother* (Karadžić, i. 301) the sister asks to be ransomed from the Turks; when she is refused she says (to our surprise) that she is a queen. Then there is the girl who sends falcons to three kings and picks the lover whose answer is most ardent; this ballad has also drifted into the Marko Kraljević cycle.

In ballads of seduction the characters often bear Moslem names. One of the most favoured motifs (Erlangen 55, 130, 191) is that of the young nobleman or prince who falls sick for love; various ladies visit him, but he is not cured until the lady of his choice comes. He seizes her, and kisses her for three days and nights. There are two dénouements. In one the lady outwits the trickster and forces him to marry her. In the other there is an aggrieved husband, Ali Pasha, who complains to the prince's father:

‘God be with thee, good my lord the Sultan,  
still thou sendest not my lady pasha,  
one who seemeth like a quail for beauty.’  
But the Sultan this reply inditeth:  
‘Cease thy folly, good my lord the Pasha,  
and thy seeking this thy quail for beauty  
now enarmèd by my grey-green falcon.’

A clever woman finds means of evading the dishonest proposals of her brother-in-law, and a bride contrives to kill the escort who would take advantage of her on her bridal journey (Karadžić, i. 743). As for ballads of adultery, the most fortunate has been *Asanaginica* (Erlangen 6). There are several versions of this piece. One came to the notice of the great Goethe, and passed from him to the hands of Sir Walter Scott. In this way it played an important part in the diffusion of the fame of ‘Morlachian’ balladry.

Justly or unjustly, Asanaga suspected his wife, beat her and sent her home; then he languished for love of her, but she would not return. The version known to Goethe opens finely with the sickness of Asanaga:

Say, what whitens on the grassy hill-side?  
Is it snow-drift? are white swans a-flying?  
Were it snow-drift, snow long since had melted;  
were it white swans, swans away had fluttered.  
Not a snow-drift, not white swans a-flying,  
but pavilions of Aga Hassan Aga,  
where he sickens, where is sorely wounded.  
To his comfort mother comes and sister,  
but his true love shame forbids to cheer him.  
So, with gashes healed and wounds a-closing,  
he unbending ordered thus his true love:  
'Ne'er attend me in my whitened mansion,  
in my mansion, nor among my people.'

Repudiated in this fashion, she soon has new suitors, and the bridal train passes Hassan in his house. Her heart cannot bear the thought of her two sons:

Mere spectator then was Hassan Aga,  
summoned softly to his side two children:  
'Hither come ye, oh my luckless orphans!  
your misfortunes cannot win compassion  
from your mother, from a heart so stony.'  
Stood and listened Hassanaginica,  
white of feature to the ground she stumbled,  
by the roadside yielded up her spirit,  
slain by anguish, looking on her orphans.

(Đurić, viii. 10.)

A group of ballads concerning a false wife punished for her falseness should probably be centred on Bulgaria and dated from an epoch before the extant Bulgarian ballads arose. The tableau is generally the same: a warrior is travelling with his bride when he is attacked by enemies, with whom she sides; some chance gives him back his weapons, and he takes due revenge. This is the matter of the Yugoslav ballad of *Grujo Novaković* and *Popović Stojan* among those of bandits (Erlangen 117, 71), and of *Banović Strahinja* among those classed as historical and ancient (Karadžić, ii. 42). The Bulgarian *Iskren and Milica* (Dozon 34) is of the later haiduk type, and notably ferocious; and in Russia this tale is related

in the imaginative ballad of *Mihail Potyk* and his faithless supernatural bride, the white swan Marja Lebedaja. As for passionate crime and incest, the usual types are current: murders for jealousy, unnatural motherhood, poisoning, incestuous proposals, and the like. In *The King and Queen of Buda* (Karadžić, i. 615) we have the motif of the *Curioso impertinente*. Wishing to know which of her three husbands the queen has loved best, he learns that he is not only the last but the worst.

The tragedies of love are so numerous that they can only be indicated generically: Trouble arises from the opposition of parents or the intervention of powerful rivals. The simplest, naïvest tableau is that of the youth who is forced into a hateful marriage, so that he dies and his girl with him (*Omer and Merjem*, Erlangen 65). Another is hanged, another decapitated; the fiancée follows with the same death. In *Latin Andro and maid Marica* (Erlangen 56) the scene is rather more original. When Andro died Marica's grief was so deep that she put off her suitors for years. Even when she had at last consented to be remarried, she could not pass Andro's grave without a sigh; which roused the disgust of her new husband so that he killed her on the spot. The true lovers' hands met beneath the mould and a green apple was in them; from Marica grew a rose and from Andro's side flowed cool waters. The 'maumariée' theme also is well known in Serbian balladry.

A remarkable version of the theme, originally perhaps French, of the girl who feigned death to save her honour, or at least an unwelcome suitor, is entitled *Hercegovinian Stepan* (Karadžić i. 727, 728). It is the ruthlessness of the tests, which are like those of *Young Radoica*, that distinguishes this ballad from its western congeners, but link it to the Czech piece previously mentioned. Neither fire, serpent, nor tickling with a moustache can make the pretended dead girl quiver. As a sign of its provenience one may note that in other ballads Hercegovinian Stepan is said to be a Latin. There are also several more playful ballads of baffled suitors, in which a youth tries to waylay a girl, but she rides off unharmed. One girl dresses like a newly wedded woman, another like her brother, another like a young prince and demands the ravisher's services in her retinue. Marko Kraljević, Todor of Pomorje, and Stojan Janković were named as heroes of the adventure of the warrior's homecoming, and there are comparatively slight differences in the telling.



A pleasing feature of Stojan's return is that he reveals himself by singing a little allegorical ditty:

'By her dear nest watched the pretty swallow,  
truly watched it till nine years were ended,  
but this morning she begins to rend it;  
comes a-guesting here a grey-green falcon  
from the high seat of the honoured sultan,  
and he wills not that the nest be scattered.'

In the treatment of crimes the Yugoslav poets have maintained generally the discretion of the best periods. They speak of typical horrors rather than of the Newgate Calendar. One such, entitled *Woeful Janja* (Karadžić, i. 668), has spread as far as Czechoslovakia, where it is entitled *The Robber's Bride*. A special feature of Balkan poetry is the record of Turkish extortions. On one occasion a couple of tax-gatherers are shown as trying to collect poll-tax from a cock, on the ground that the cock is probably a Christian. *The Sale of Bogdan's Wife* uses this motif of extortion for preamble to the tale of the man who sold his wife to one who proved to be her brother (cf. Politis 86 A). How Turk preys on Turk is shown in *Asanaga's Palace* (Erlangen 142).

There are the usual surprising recognitions, as when the queen recognizes in her slave her brother. A feminine bandit, who had at last been reduced to enter a pasha's harem, rebukes the other women for their wantonness, and *Old Čevan's Zlatija* (Đurić, vii. 4) is a good ballad of the girl who went to war.

What has been said of the ballads of Yugoslavia is generally true of those of Bulgaria, though with some differences of detail. The collection brought together by the Miladinov brothers closely resembles in style and content the Hercegovinian ballads of the Erlangen manuscript. There is the same absence of the nobler and more archaic poetry of the Montenegrins, the same prominence of Marko Kraljević in his more novelesque appearances, the same weakness in history. In the Miladinov collection there are variants of *The Founding of Ravanica* and *Dušan's Wedding*, the latter transferred to the Bulgarian Tsar Šišman (47, 57), who has another ballad also to his credit. It is not impossible that in some such case the Bulgarian form may be older. Eight ballads prove that the Bulgar interest in medieval Hungary was as keen as the Serbian, and that John Hunyadi and Matthias Corvinus were their typical heroes. But there is no solid core of ballads definitely

important for the nationality of Bulgarians. In this respect the Bulgarian corpus is characteristically late. It is late also in respect of a certain coarsening of fibre and exaggeration of the cruel and horrible. To cover the anonymity of many heroes the poets repeat the single name Stojan. Stojan suffers all the adventures, and has no personal attributes that would interest us in a man of flesh and blood. The thin line between tragedy and horror is not sufficiently observed. Ballads are often cruel; but in those of the best epochs the cruelty is not italicized. The modern Bulgarian ballad-monger, especially those known to Auguste Dozon, is wont not merely to kill, but to butcher. A stale smell of blood hangs round too many of his wares. To some extent this must be laid at the door not of the Bulgar but of his pitiless oppressors. Injustice and extortion were rampant in the villages, leading to savage revenge. The girls were abused by young Turks, and the boys imprisoned and hanged when idle khanums happened to ogle them from the harem lattices. The gendarme is all the government they know, and his actions are entirely arbitrary; he is satisfied so long as he discovers some victim to punish. Christian women file past us in the ballads in long chains of prisoners, nursing a bitter hatred against the Turk. Yet what is particularly depressing in these ballads is the attitude of acquiescence, showing an impoverishment of the soul. Even the outlaws dream of no more than ultimate subjection. Neither personal liberty nor national spirit inspires them so much as thirst for blood and booty. To rob is to augment the family property; all boys and some girls pass through a few profitable years of brigandage. When captured, the outlaw concentrates his efforts on making a good appearance on the scaffold.

Lying between Serbia and Rumania and Greece and Rumania, Bulgaria lies in the track of several international ballads. Its *Master Mano* (Miladinov 424) is undoubtedly related in an intimate way, as source or copy, to the *Master Manole* of Rumania, and its *Lazar and Petkana* (Miladinov 100) to the Rumanian *Voichiță*. *Sick Doičin* (Miladinov 88) corresponds to the Rumanian *Doncilă* (Alecsandri 29) and to the *Ivo Karlovič* of the Erlangen manuscript (110). The Kraljević ballads which have extended to Rumania have also crossed Bulgarian territory. A number of Bulgarian poems are concerned with surprising recognitions, particularly of sisters by brothers who have felt an innate love for them (Miladinov 76, 87, 110, 135, 120); and there is a considerable

cycle of ballads about prisoners. One of the former, *Pavel and his Sister* (Miladinov 135) is related to a Ukrainian ballad reproduced by Antonović and Dragomanov (63). The supernatural ballads concerning the Moon and Sun, which are somewhat richer in Bulgaria than Serbia, form a link with Rumania, where one of the best is on the love of these two bodies (*Ileana Cosânzeana*, Alecsandri 9). Among the classes of ballads the authorities on Bulgaria include one of shepherds' songs (ovčjarski) alongside those of haiduks, and this prominence given to shepherds prepares us for the remarkably pastoral nature of the Rumanian pieces.

The Bulgarian metres are also intermediate between those of Serbia and Rumania. The heroic decasyllable is less used than the later and more lyrical octosyllable; Rumanian lines are octosyllabic or shorter. There is no trace of rhyme in Bulgarian work. An interesting feature is the use of irregular lines. They are mostly to be found in ballads of the supernatural from eastern Macedonia (Dozon's appendix). Some of them represent merely failure to keep the eight syllable count, but in others the irregularity seems to be a prosodic principle (*The Fountain of the Samovile*, Dozon, App. 10). It does not correspond to the archaic 'bugarštice' known to the Serbians, but is rather a wildness that can only be regulated by the chant; that is, the sort of normalized unevenness which we encounter in the Ukrainian 'dumi' and the Russian 'byliny'. There seems no frontier dividing the music of Bulgaria from that of South Russia.

### 3. Rumania

Rumanian balladry began its career under the impulse of the burst of Serbian creative genius in the sixteenth century. The 'guslari' were the fathers of the 'lăutari', and many of the 'balade' are derived from Serbo-Bulgar 'pesme' or are of the same general type. The correspondence is closer with Bulgaria than with Serbia. In versification, for instance, the Bulgars already show a preference for short lines rather than long, and this preference is absolute in Rumania. A number of special circumstances, however, have conspired to give a peculiar flavour to the songs of the Rumanians. They are a Latin-speaking people hemmed in between Slavs. In the 'green leaves' formula (by which poems or sections of poems begin with an appeal to the green leaves of some tree or plant) we find something remarkably like the appeal to flowers in Italian 'stornelli'. The Istro-Rumanians are indeed in contact with Italian

culture. The Macedo-Rumanians in the south are to a large extent nomad shepherds and mingle with Greeks and Slavs. They have given the word 'Vlach' to their neighbours' vocabularies. A Greek 'Vlachic song' (Politic 236) is composed from the standpoint of a herdsman threatened by the klephts. The pastoral tinge is the most characteristic feature of all the best Rumanian ballads, and is their special note in the concert of European folk-poetry. The shepherds (ciobani) have for neighbours the haiduks, as in Bulgaria; the seasons govern them both with equal severity, and any chance may cause them to change from the one class to the other. A third group of Rumanians—those of Ardeal or Transylvania—took the lead in written literature under the influence of the Reformation and of their neighbours the Saxons of Siebenbürgen. Thanks to them the Rumanians were exposed to western cultural influences of a German type, and it was doubtless also due to them that the 'lăutari' learned to rhyme. In the last place, the separation between lyric and narrative, which had been set up in Yugoslavia and observed fairly well in Bulgaria, was obscured in Rumania. The 'balade'—or rather, to give them their popular name, 'cântece bătrânești' 'old songs'—are narratives impregnated with lyricism.

The clue to Rumanian folk-poetry is thus provided by the lyrics, and these may be much older than narrative verse. The favoured lyrical form is the 'doină'. In one case, it is true, we may see how a narrative has degenerated into a lyric; that has been the fate of the finest of Rumanian ballads, *Miorița*, in Transylvania. Such a transformation would not necessarily prove that the narrative manner is, in all other instances, the older. Existing 'doine' express timeless, nameless emotions, and give no hint of the causes of their begetting. The bulk of them are doubtless quite recent improvisations. A few short lines suffice; the singer unburdens his heart by the mere act of singing:

The wind of Spring blows on the moors  
as I sing *doine* out of doors;  
to soothe my soul my song avails  
mid flowerets and nightingales.  
When winter comes tempestuous,  
I sing my *doine* shut in house,  
to fill the daytime with delight,  
the daytime and the weary night.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. Tagliavini, *Antologia Rumena*, Heidelberg, 1923, No. 95 (a).

So the 'doină' has the spontaneity of the Lithuanian 'daina'. The emotions released are those that come from solitude, unconditioned by company and without definite source. A sense of longing without objective is the Rumanian's 'dor', and when this passes to discontent it is his 'urât'. The only other presence is that of Nature, and Nature—wooded hills—appears in incidental notes. He gives a vague background, by addressing the green leafage of the nearest trees, either at the beginning of his song, or in its pauses:

Green leaf of the blackberry—  
no boy kindly thinks of me!

Green leaf of the shamrock green—  
no such girls as we are seen.

So 'frunză verde' or 'foaie verde' is a refreshing background to all their songs.

In addition to these general lyrics there are those for specific occasions. Those devised for weddings are of special charm. The bridegroom's friends come with pomp to the bride's home, saying they have been sent by the 'young emperor', who is out hunting; he has seen the spoor of some fair game that has taken shelter in that house, or perhaps he has seen a bird and sent his huntsmen to take it. There are songs to dry the bride's tears as she leaves her home; she, who cannot return to her flower garden, will herself become a garden of flowers. These songs invoke 'Lado', the Slavonic Eros; the name of the god of luck survives in the 'leru, lerom' of the 'colinde' or Yule songs. They wish luck to the person fêted, and beg for cakes or refreshment. The influence of the Nativity causes some of them to embark on a short biblical narrative, which is usually interrupted. The 'bocete' are laments screamed by professional mourners. The Greek round dance is accompanied by the artless 'hore', in which the words are few and the sense negligible, while the shouts of the dancers are sometimes formalized into a refrain. There are songs for rain-making and for the ceremonial crowning of the last sheaf in a field, and a mass of charms against disease or to favour truel ove. There are even rudimentary lyrical dramas—the 'irozii'—which have sprung from the story of the Twelfth Night.

This lyricism invades the narrative poems also, obscures the exposition and infuses the whole with an indefinite emotion. It goes naturally with the other chief characteristic of Rumanian

balladry: its pastoralism.<sup>1</sup> Many of the best ballads have shepherds for heroes, and many more are touched incidentally by pastoral concepts. There is an exquisite dialogue between some bystander and a dead shepherd, quoted by Densusianu:

Leafage green of flowers three,  
 little shepherd of the sheep,  
 where has death encountered thee?  
 'On the summit of the hill,  
 which the winds with lashings fill  
 and the firs are never still.'  
 By what death, say, didst thou die?  
 'By a lightning-crash on high.'  
 And who raised the funeral cry?  
 'Little birdies chirping by,  
 raised for me the funeral cry.'  
 Who was there the corpse to lave?  
 'Twas the rain that earthward drave,  
 'twas the rain the corpse did lave.'  
 Who laid thee out in seemly wise?  
 'Twas the moon, when she did rise,  
 laid me out in seemly wise.'  
 Who has set the candles there?  
 'Twas the sun that rose in air,  
 he has set the candles there.'  
 Who has brought thee to the tomb?  
 'Three big pine-trees overthrown,  
 they have brought me to the tomb.'  
 Where is now thy flute so fine?  
 'Up there on a branch of pine,  
 when the thrashing winds are strong,  
 then my flutelet sings its song,  
 and together flock my sheep,  
 over me a vigil keep.'

*The Dead Shepherd* is a thing perfect in its kind. The supreme example of the pastoral ballad is *Miorița* 'the ewe-lamb', of which Densusianu has printed twenty versions, together with another twenty reduced to the status of a lyric. The variations are great, and it is hardly possible to single out any version as itself perfect; but they all convey, in greater or less degree, the essential poetry of this creation. The subject is the murder, real or imagined, of one

<sup>1</sup> O Densusianu, *Vieața păstorească în Poesia noastră populară*, Bucharest 1922-3.

shepherd by two others who envied him his fine flock. Making use of the superstition that sheep can be second-sighted, and that some of their cries portend death, the poet or his successors have been able to remodel the narrative, reducing it to its quintessential pathos. It becomes a dialogue between the doomed shepherd and his lamb:

'At set of sun,  
there'll be murder done  
by the Ungurean  
and that Vrâncean.'  
'O lambkin mine,  
so wondrous fine,  
must I be killed  
in fennel field,  
tell the Vrâncean  
and the Ungurean,  
my corpse to hide  
in a grave beside  
the fold for the sheep,  
for aye to sleep  
by the sheepcot here,  
that my dogs me hear.'

So the short, sobbing, monotonous verses go on, with no thought of resistance to an inevitable fate. The genesis of this piece may be ascribed to the south-western corner of Moldavia, where, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there were frequent battles between the shepherds as they sought new pastures in the Carpathian hills. It spread outward in all directions, but the versions gathered on the circumference are less moving than those of the centre.

So it comes about that the Rumanian ballads are habitually unheroic. They are so unlike those of Serbia in tone, that a stirring note is almost a sure sign of foreign origin. The ballads of shepherds are timeless and nameless. Nature is destiny, and often cruel, but it is not tragic, since there is no complaint or repining against fate. The two great ballads—*Miorița* and *Master Manole*—express an unrepining helplessness in the face of a disaster which is seen but cannot be prevented. They are melancholy, but not sceptical or angry; they are optimistic, because there is a fundamental belief in naïve goodness. A wistful, momentary grace falls on songs in which the simplest words are the most moving.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> L. Rusu, *Le Sens de l'existence dans la Poésie populaire roumaine*, Paris, 1935.

shepherd works in the clearings of the forests on the Carpathian ridges. Winter drives him to his hovel for shelter, but in spring his soul is uplifted in unfettered freedom. The same experiences affected the haiduk, lurking behind the leafage of the forest trees. His sentiments are those of the shepherds. The two classes were liable to clash (as in the ballad *Fulga*), but the outlaw was hardly more than an unfortunate shepherd, and the shepherd was looked upon as a potential robber by the governors in the cities. In this way the poems of shepherds and outlaws form but one mass, and that is the largest in Rumanian balladry.

These things being premised concerning the essentials of Rumanian folk-poetry, we may proceed to an account of its rise and development.<sup>1</sup> The lyrical genres, naturally, do not lie within the corners of this argument. The narrative style was not available to commemorate the feats of Stephen the Great (1457-1504), but it was probably heard shortly afterwards in the court of the Serbian wife of Neagoe Basarab (1512-21). It was by the munificence of Neagoe and Despina that the exquisite monastery of Argeş arose, the gem of Rumanian architecture. Popular tradition has preferred to attribute the building to Negru Voda, the founder of the principality. As for the manner and circumstances, they have been supposed to be those of the Greek *Bridge of Arta*, following one of the Macedonian versions in which the name of the architect is Manoli (who flourished about 1659). It is only under strict reserves that we can include the ballad of *Master Manole or The Monastery of Argeş* among historical ballads. In the early years of the seventeenth century the Yugoslav 'guslari' were welcomed in the halls of Polish lords and by the Cossacks of the Ukraine, and with them went Rumanian 'lăutari', 'qui valachica lingua patrium carmen pleno gutture cantabant'. Their style was parodied in the preface to Dosofteiu's Psalter in 1670, and a good many of Neculce's anecdotes in the early eighteenth century seem derived from ballads. The genre was established firmly, therefore, in the seventeenth century, having taken its rise in the preceding one.

The first series of historical ballads extended down to the ruin of Michael the Brave in 1601. In *Boy Mihu* (Alecsandri 23) he goes singing through the wood, and his song attracts outlaws to attack him. They are Hungarians and led by Ianoş, i.e. by John Hunyadi. The hero is evidently borrowed from Yugoslav and

<sup>1</sup> See Note Q, p. 392.



Bulgar balladry, as also the whole unsophisticated tableau. It is used again, without historical attachments, in *Vidra* and *Păunaș* (Alecsandri 27, 8), and has come from the cycle of Marko Kraljević. The same John Hunyadi is the hero of *Țancu Vodă* (Teodorescu, p. 490), which is based on a Serbian original. The horrid fate of Constantine Brâncoveanu in 1714—slaughtered after his three sons had been decapitated before his eyes—is the subject of a ballad that rises to the height of the occasion (Alecsandri 52). In general, however, the historical element in balladry belongs less to the facts than to the setting. Under the Turkish yoke the themes of poetry could hardly be national, especially as the principates had never yet been brought into union. But the Moldavians had to struggle against the Nogai Tatars of the Steppes, and those who dwelt by the Danube were exposed to the scandalous exactions of Turkish tax-gatherers. These are vividly portrayed in *Tudorel* (Teodorescu, p. 675) and in the ballad entitled *Ilincuța Sandului* (Teodorescu, p. 635). *Român Grue Grosșovanul* (Alecsandri 25) is an exciting ballad of escape from the Nogai nomads.

*Toma Alinoș* (Alecsandri 24) portrays the lawlessness which such oppression brings. It is one of the best of Rumanian ballads, and is characteristic in the passivity, at least at the beginning, of its hero. Toma is resting at ease when a certain Manea creeps up on him. Mortally wounded, Toma contrives to push in again his entrails and pursue and kill his murderer. The poem is akin to those of bandits, of which the perfected examples are *Golea* (Teodorescu, p. 584) and *Corbea* (Alecsandri 35).

As in Bulgaria, so in Rumania there are some excellent ballads of a supernatural character. The best is *Sun and Moon or Ileana Cosânzeana* (Alecsandri 9). It exploits, in the interest of aetiological myth, the well-known ballad motif of the avoidance of incest: the poem explains why two heavenly bodies, which always regard each other, can never meet. The Sun's outrageous wooing and the swooning terror of the Moon lead up to a simple situation of tragedy which only God's word can resolve. *Balaurul* (Alecsandri 4) is about a hero sacrificed to a dragon by his mother's malison. *The Cuckoo and Turtledove* (Alecsandri 3) would be supernatural, since it attributes speech to dumb animals, were it not rather to be considered as allegorical. While these superstitions are doubtless old, the ballads need not be considered the oldest of their class.

There are many Rumanian ballads with foreign analogues. *Master Manole* and *Voichiță* (Tocilescu, pp. 18, 139) are unquestionably Greek, and probably borrowed directly from the Greeks in Macedonia. There are more Serbo-Bulgar contacts, due to the borrowing either of ballads or of the general pattern of plots. So *Păunaș* and *Vidra* (Alecsandri 8, 27) employ, as we have seen, the Serbian motif of the careless hero who goes singing in the woods and so attracts dangerous enemies to attack him. *Doncilă* (Alecsandri 29) is the Serbo-Bulgar ballad of *Sick Doičin*, who arises from his pallet to defend his sister and punishes those who would seek to profit by her distress. *Badău* (Alecsandri 32) is a Bulgar ballad of escape from Turkish oppressors. In *Rada* (Alecsandri 31) the tests of a lover's fidelity are those exacted in Serbia by a maiden of Senj. The Rumanians have three ballads of Marko Kraljević (Candrea-Densusianu, pp. 87, 120, *Flori alese* 185). *Voinicul Oleaz* (Candrea-Densusianu, p. 73) is the story of the bride sold to pay the poll-tax to the Turks, which we have already encountered in Greece and Serbia. Old Novak is a hero to the Rumanians as to the Serbs (Alecsandri 36, 37). In the *Cadi's Daughter* he intervenes to protect his son Ioviță who has stolen the girl from her father, remarking that boys will be boys!

These are ballads of the Balkans, but there are also a few which have travelled more widely. *The Old Man* (Teodorescu, p. 616) is the Rumanian offshoot of the *Moringer* saga, *Iencea Sabiencea* (Teodorescu, p. 639) of *Marianson's Rings*, and *Mizil Crai* (Tocilescu, p. 126) of *The Girl who went to War*. *Oancea* (Tocilescu, p. 45) concerns an adulteress who instigated her paramour to kill her husband, but horrifies him so that he kills or abandons her; thus it runs parallel to the German *Lady of Weissenberg* and the Serbian *Vukašin's Marriage*. The tests of affection applied to his family and his fiancée by Petrea or Mircea (Candrea-Densusianu, p. 102) are those of the Serbian ballads: he pretends to have concealed a snake in his bosom, and only his fiancée dares to take it out. The cruelty of a stepmother, as displayed in the French *La Porcheronne*, appears also in the Rumanian *Alimon* (*Flori alese* 192). *The Ring and the Veil* (Alecsandri 7) makes use of the superstition that intimate apparel can fade when its former possessor is oppressed or unfaithful. Looking on the veil his bride had given him, an unnamed youth bethought him to return home; where he found that his lands were wasted and his bride drowned in a pond.

He died too. When the pond was drained, the lovers were found clasped in an embrace. A pine and a vine grow from their dust, and embrace for ever. The story seems indigenous to Rumania in respect of the drowning of the girl; but the miraculous elements are common property throughout Europe.

## IV

### RUSSIAN BALLADS

#### 1. *Great Russia*

RUSSIAN ballads—'byliny' or 'stariny'—differ from those of all the rest of Europe in form, style, and theme. They are not entirely separate, since there is some evidence that western and southern elements have migrated into the Russian sub-continent; yet even in telling the same story the characteristic Russian divergencies are such that the identification is hedged with doubt. Nowhere else is there so bold a reliance on the normalizing power of the melody, allowing the length of lines and disposal of stresses to show the greatest anomalies. The plots and characters of these poems are singularly vague. A Russian ballad hero has no more than an indeterminate temperament, so that the improvisers attach to each one stories in keeping with this temperament. Dobrynja is courteous, Il'ja mature and sage, Aljoša is rash, Čurilo is young and gay, Djuk is rich, and so on; but it is not impossible that the story told of Aljoša may also be told of Čurilo, or that Dobrynja and Il'ja should be credited with the same feat. Having satisfied this modest requirement of decorum, the ballad-poet and even the reciter may expand or contract the ballad almost indefinitely. He may simplify the incidents or slow up the narrative by inserting long tirades of conventional verses. The bounds of the several stories are unfixed, and divisions made by scholars in the interests of precision are in fact arbitrary. A strong antiquarian interest demands that almost all adventures should be brought into relation with the old principality of Kiev under the rule of Prince Vladimir. It has preserved many authentic names famous in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries; but the adventures related are almost entirely fabulous. Some of the technique of narration and the basic principles of melody have doubtless been imported into Russia from the Eastern Empire; but in neither this nor any other respect is there any such dependence on Greece as to justify grouping the 'byliny' with the 'tragoudia'. The ballad-poetry of Russia—the 'byliny' of Great Russia and the 'dumi' of the Ukraine—demands treatment in a section apart from all others.

Tradition has caused all the oldest ballads to be grouped in the

cycles of Kiev and Novgorod, and, by endowing the heroes with historic names, has coloured the whole genre with an elusive historicity. The Novgorod cycle contains three pieces and is unconnected with Vladimir of Kiev. The remaining adventures are supposed to take place in the Kiev of the tenth or eleventh century even when they are palpably modern or when they bear internal evidence of having originated in Galicia, Volynia, or even Novgorod. At Kiev they are now unknown. Kiev is in the Ukraine (or Little Russia), and the 'byliny' are a Great Russian genre. Their hero is Vladimir, but there is nothing to show whether the Saint or Vladimir Monomah is intended, since the actions described are not appropriate to either. Dobrynja bears a historical name, and so does Prince Roman, but there were several wearers of those names in the period in question, and there is nothing in Dobrynja's or Roman's actions that corresponds to one model rather than to another. At other times scholars are able to suggest expeditions or sieges as possible bases for ballad incidents, but the identification remains vague. The 'byliny' tell us almost nothing that is certainly true of the old principate, and they tell us much that is palpably fabulous; they have all suffered revision in the light of Muscovite prejudices, and their common background is memories of the Tatar domination from Batu's invasion to Ermak's conquest of Siberia.

In these circumstances it is well to fix our eyes first on some undoubted Kievite poetry, so that we may know in what manner actual events would have been treated by contemporaries. *Prince Igor's Expedition*<sup>1</sup> must be our guide. It is not a 'bylina', and it is not quite an epic. The author is fully conscious of his authorship, which he parades by parodying the style of an older poet named Bojań.<sup>2</sup> Igor, who died in 1202, was alive when this poem was made, since its author speaks of the Kievite principate as lasting from old Vladimir's time to present-day Igor (ot starogo Vladimira

<sup>1</sup> Eugène Liatzky, *Le Dit d'Igor*, Prague, 1934; *Slovo o polku Igoreve* (with three Russian modernizations), Moscow, 1934. G. Štorm's rendering has numbered lines.

<sup>2</sup> 'Načati že sja tŭi pēsni po bylinam sego vremeni, a ne po zamyšleniju Bojanju' seems to mean 'to begin the song on the events of his own time, and not in Bojań's manner'. About 1860, scholars took the word 'bylina' to be the name of a genre, and this use of 'bylina' is now established, though the peasants say 'starina' 'old song'. If we remember its rather stupid origin as a technical term, we shall not be tempted to beg the question of ballad or epic priority, as its originators did.

do nyněšnego Igorja). The nucleus is an account of a raid executed by Igor and his brother Vsevolod against the nomad Polovcy. Igor is the poet's type of heroic valour; we would rather call it foolhardiness. He determines to carry out his raid despite unfavourable omens. With his brother's help he advances to the Don and skirmishes on the banks of the Kajala. The Polovcy rally after their discomfiture, completely surround the Russian forces, and rout them despite Vsevolod's valiant efforts. Igor is taken prisoner, but escapes before the poem closes. The language is picturesque and vivid, as in the description of a storm at dawn which is the flight of Polovcy arrows. Their leaders are Gza and Končak, and they are heathens; but the Russians, who are Christians of a sort, still believe effectively in Stribog and Dažd'bog and in Div, the wood-demon. Round this nucleus there are apparently discordant elements. One is evidently an interpolation; it is a hymn in praise of Svjatoslav of Kiev who actually defeated the Polovcy under their leader Kobjak, and so is compared with Igor to his disadvantage. Another passage is used to upbraid the Russian princes for their disunion. There are paragraphs dealing with other campaigns against the Polovcy, and laments for Igor and other rulers. Thanks to these accretions as well as to the work of the first author, the poem is strikingly wealthy in precise information about persons. Vladimir I falls just outside the poets' view, but scores of his successors are named, so that an elaborate genealogical table is needed for the understanding of the references.

All this is very different from the style of the Kievite ballads. In them all the history of Kiev is telescoped into the reign of a single Vladimir, without our being able to say which he is of two (one died in 1015, the other in 1125). His consort is Apraksja, corresponding to the Eupraxia who fell into Batu's hands in 1237. Igor's soldiers fight against the Polovcy, and there is not a whisper of those Tatars of the Golden Horde who have completely taken the place of the Polovcy in the 'byliny'. The geography of *Igor's Expedition* is precise, and one can fix the frontier of the Kievite kingdom a little to the east of the Sula, a tributary of the Dnêpr; but the 'byliny' have Kiev as an imaginary centre and the unlimited steppes for a circumference. It is plainly to be inferred that nothing corresponding to the extant ballads would have been imaginable in the time of the author of *Igor*. Though, on his testimony, the style of Bojań was different, and apparently (since

he offers one or two parodies) more floridly imaginative, it is even less possible to believe that the notes of time, place, and person would have been anachronistically applied by a contemporary of the Vladimirs. The Kiev cycle, if it represents the literature of the court of Kiev in any way, must be regarded as the flotsam and jetsam of a foundered poetry, recovered in a later age, pieced together and expanded with the utmost licence of creation.

Two things, however, may be affirmed concerning this Kievite court poetry. The *Expedition of Igor* springs partly out of epinician odes addressed to the heroes, as we know otherwise to have been an established custom. Narrative details were not necessary, since the event was fresh in the memory of the troops which improvised them; the important thing in them was the name of the victor. Laments for the dead also preserved the memory of a name. Hence, when the 'byliny' came to be composed, there were at hand many famous names and surnames, unaccompanied by precise details of their lives. Those who bore the same name would be confused in one personality, since the ballad poet had neither the means nor the inclination to make distinctions. Dobrynja, the uncle of Vladimir I, and Dobrynja of Rjazan who perished on the Kalka in 1224, make one ballad Dobrynja; Aljoša Popović was one of the seventy champions who died on the Kalka; Roman in the ballads is a compound of two different Romans separated by the length of the thirteenth century; Glěb Volod'evič is probably derived from the names of two allies who attacked Korsuň in 1077, namely, Glěb Svjatoslavič and Vladimir II Vsevolodovič, though the ballad also contains the name of Marinka, taken from the wife of the Pseudo-Demetrius, the seventeenth-century usurper. Similarly, in the Novgorod cycle, Vasilii Buslaev was probably the 'posadnik' who died in 1171, and Sadko was the rich Sodko or Sūdko who built the first stone church in the city in 1167. Such identifications are open to dispute, and the scholar is warned not to pursue them into too meticulous detail; but, taken globally, they make it certain that many of the names occurring in 'byliny' are historical and belong approximately to the epoch of the Vladimirs.

That such names should survive through encomia and laments is in keeping with the habits of Rurik and his companions, who were accustomed to similar improvisations from their skalds. The Scandinavian practice doubtless stimulated or blended with the native 'veličanija'. Addressed by a retainer to a chief, such out-

pourings were careful to preserve the name, and to indicate the ground for praise or sorrow, but not to go into narrative particulars. They would adequately account for the presence of so many authentic names and the absence of authentic narratives. A Ukrainian piece, with the name left in blank, though late, may be representative of the genre:

Famous, fair, renowned N . . . ,  
 what the deed that brought thee glory?  
 Dusk—and on horse his saddle's laid;  
 day—he alights at Tsarigrad,  
 and fights and fights with Tsarigrad.  
 Out comes the tsar, so sore afraid,  
 and burghers hasten, counsel take,  
 if any gift his ire may slake.<sup>1</sup>

The poem goes on to describe the offer of a tribute of horses or gold, but the hero refuses to accept any other gift than that of a princess under her wedding crown. The editors conjectured that this piece might be a reference to Svatoslav Igorevič; it is one of several which have to do with sieges.

The other fact about which we may rest assured is that there developed at Kiev, before the end of the twelfth century, a considerable heroic legend concerning the champion Il'ja. It is as the representative hero of Russia that *Elias von Rüssen* appears in *Ortnit* and *Iljas af Greka* in the *Thidrekssaga*. The latter takes no important share in the action, but is associated with Vladimir (Valdemar) as well as with a certain Osangtrix (Oserich), who is Dietrich's principal antagonist in the east. Oserich of Russia is a figure of the *Biterolf*; Hertnid (Ortnit), of Novgorod, transferred to Lake Garda in Italy, became the hero of his own epos, with Elias, his mother's brother, for his chief courtier and officer. The acts of Elias correspond to none of those in the 'byliny', but his name and fame stood high among neighbouring Germans in the early thirteenth century. Traces of his fame have been found in the Ukraine and in White Russia<sup>2</sup> of the sixteenth century—neither a district

<sup>1</sup> V. Antonovič and M. Dragomanov, *Istoričeskija Pěsni Malorusskago Naroda*, Kiev, 1874, i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> White Russian folk-verse is of a highly lyrical character. It is exemplified in P. V. Šein, *Bělorusskija narodnyja Pěsni*, St. Petersburg, 1874, and discussed amply by E. Karskiĭ, *Geschichte der weissrussischen Volksdichtung und Literatur* (Grundriss der slavischen Philologie), Berlin, 1926. I have some references to narrative poems in this dialect, especially to those contained in Bezsonov's



where 'byliny' are at home. He was then known as *Il'ja Moroz-lennin*, which stands close to the Finnish form of the name, *Muurovitsa*; but the surname in the ballads is always *Muromec*. Though there have been conjectures that the German *Elias* or *Eligas* may rest on *Oleg* or *Vol'ga*, and that *Muromec* may derive through *Murmanjanin* from 'Northman', yet *Il'ja* is the conspicuous case of a hero of 'byliny' whose person has resisted all attempts at historical identification. His legend, as known at the end of the twelfth century, must have been heroic fiction, and more likely than not in verse. The adventures attributed to him are numerous, and though some are demonstrably late and others are discordant, they do adumbrate a kind of poetical biography,<sup>1</sup> that is, some sort of epos.

The narrative and prosodic art of *Igor's Expedition* resembles that of the 'byliny', without identity. The lines of both are free from rhyme and syllable-count, being measured only by the chant. While it is risky to dogmatize in the absence of adequate studies, the music of the 'byliny' and Ukrainian 'dumi' is apparently Byzantine, and a continuation of the style practised in the eastern Balkans. The device of negative comparison is established in the 'byliny', in *Igor*, in Serbo-Bulgar poetry, and in the 'tragoudia'. There are fixed epithets in the Kieville epic, but there is no such use of reduplication or delaying devices as in the 'byliny'. On the other hand, the author makes use of the Scandinavian trick of apposition, which is not favoured later. The poet indulges in characteristically Russian hyperbole, though he has no occasion for the titanic humour of some 'byliny'. In short, the essentials of the later style are mostly present in the courtly epos of the late Kieville epoch, and they are to be found also in the folk-verse of Greece and the Balkan Slavs; but the manner used in the 'byliny' was not then complete in all its details.

We may thus address our minds to the 'byliny' themselves,<sup>2</sup> poems which belong wholly to Great Russia, though their oldest subjects are associated with Kiev and Novgorod, lying outside Great Russia. Whatever relics of history may be concealed within them, the 'byliny' suppose a framework which is not that of the *Bélorusskija Pěsni*, a work I have not been able to consult. I have not attempted in this book any account of White Russian folk-song, but content myself with offering the reader these references.

<sup>1</sup> The cycle is separately studied in O. Miller, *Il'ja Muromec i Bogatyrsvo Kievskoe*, St. Petersburg, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> See Note R, p. 392.

historical Kiev. The centre of all adventures is that city, ruled by a dateless Vladimir. There is a ballad to tell us how Dobrynja brought a wife for Vladimir (Rybnikov 9, Speranskii, *Dobrynja-svat*); and it is a fact that Vladimir I's uncle Dobrynja was his proxy with Rognêda, daughter of Rognvolod (Ragnvald) of Polock, before 980; but in the ballads Vladimir's wife is always Apraksja or Opraksja, who is to be identified with a certain Eupraxia who fell into Batu's hands about 1237. It is supposed that Vladimir and his heroes vanished from history with the downfall of his kingdom before the Tatars. This occurred at the battle of Kalka in 1224, which gives the first shadow of a historical fact in the 'byliny'. The event is remembered in a highly novelesque manner in *Il'ja and Kalin* (Rybnikov 7, &c., Speranskii, *Il'ja i Kalin-car*), where the enemy's name may be derived from the battle. The Tatars unexpectedly made no immediate use of their victory, and it was left to Batu to consummate their triumph in 1238-40. Batu's prowess is remembered in the ballad of Dobrynja's tribute-carrying (Rybnikov 8, Speranskii, *Dobrynja i Vasilii Kazimirov*), in which, however, Dobrynja's comrade bears the name of a personage famous in the Moscow-Novgorod war of 1470-80. In some accounts of the disaster the enemy leader is said to be Mamaï, who fought in 1380 (Speranskii, *Il'ja i Mamaï*); and in others a leading role is played by Ermak (e.g. Rybnikov 7), the conqueror of Siberia in 1581-4. Muscovite notes and customs are seen throughout the 'byliny', and indicate creation or reformation during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Allowing for all that may be due to forgetfulness or wilful innovation, it remains true that the picture offered by the 'byliny' is not that of the historical Kiev (whatever elements of an older epos may be embedded in them), but of an imaginary Kiev and more real Moscow under the weakening domination of the Golden Horde. The Horde is frequently mentioned, as are also the pagan Lithuanians; never the historical Polovcy. In all these poems the Russian heroes are Christian and have quite forgotten the old pantheon, though they have no specifically Christian impulses.<sup>1</sup> They are collectively styled 'bogatyri' in deference to the Tatar 'batyr, bagadyr, bahatur',

<sup>1</sup> Religious oral poems are called 'duhovnye stihy' and are not included in collections of 'byliny'. An account of them is given in Professor and Mrs. Chadwick's *Growth of Literature*. For the sake of brevity they are not discussed in this book, as, indeed, they have been omitted elsewhere except when not formally distinguished from the secular poems.

since it was the Mongols who developed most fully the professional champion-at-arms. The word used at Kiev had been 'hrabryi' 'brave'. One of the champions bears the name *Saur*, which is Tatar for 'bull'.

Independent as they are, the 'byliny' have been open to suggestions from the west and south-west. Constantinople (*Tsarigrad*) is, for them, a greater city than Kiev, and its songs are finer. Dobrynja played his lyre in the manners of Kiev and Constantinople, when he returned to find his wife about to be married to another. He was disguised as a 'skomoroh' 'juggler, jongleur'; the 'skomorohi' correspond to the Byzantine 'skommarchoi' or masters of the revels. This is the oldest word for a Russian minstrel, though it has, like 'juggler', sunk since to the level of buffoonery. The word 'kalika' is also used in the sense of minstrel, but it properly means 'pilgrim' (as in the ballad of the *Forty Pilgrims*), a class whose interest in the entirely secular 'byliny' can only be deemed secondary. From 'kalika' to 'kalëka' 'cripple' is an easy stage, and justified by the traditional association between minstrelsy and bodily affliction; but neither of these terms is supported by the text of old ballads, as is the term 'skomoroh'. Negative comparisons and delaying devices in syntax are also a feature of Greek and Balkan balladry, held in common with Russia.

The Christian faith, when it came to Russia, was Greek in type. Michael, Elias, Nicholas are favourite saints of the Eastern Church and of the 'byliny'. These make use of Biblical narratives, but they go beyond the Biblical warrant, using the legends of Joseph, Samson, Bathsheba, and Solomon as they have been elaborated by Jewish tradition.<sup>1</sup> Čurilo Plenkovič's beauty is that of Joseph in Jewish apocrypha:

His locks of gold he tossed them all,  
his locks of gold he shook them,  
like scattering pearls he scattered them down.  
Little girls looked and burst the fences,  
young women looked and made their windows tingle,  
old hags looked and preened their mantles round them.

(Gil'ferding 223, with lines from Kirëevskiĭ, *Pěsni Sobraunya*, iv. 2.)

<sup>1</sup> For all that relates to external influences see A. N. Veselovskii, *Južno-Russkija Byliny*, St. Petersburg, 1881, and *Slavjanskija Skazanija o Solomone i Kitovrasě*, St. Petersburg, 1872, together with the summary treatment in Keltujala.

So the author of the Morisco *Poema de José* describes how women lost their senses at sight of Joseph's beauty, and Theodore Prodromos (*Rhodanthé kai Dosiklēs*) describes his hero's stroll in the capital. Samson has become one of the Russian champions, and has three 'byliny' to his name, of which the second is the Biblical story of his wedding. The other two show him usurping the place of the giant Svjatogor. He plays a part also in the early chapters of the *Thidrekssaga*. David's procuring the death of Uriah is allegorized in Dobrynja's shooting an arrow at Marina's 'dove', who is the dragon Tugarin (Speranskii, *Dobrynja i Marina*), a story which is not older than the seventeenth century. Solomon is, as usual, the type of the sage beguiled by women. These matters receive a more lush development than the Bible warrants, and so resemble (it is said) Talmudic tradition. Critics have thought this due to the Khazar Jewish khanate established in South Russia, but it may be unnecessary to argue in favour of a specific and ancient Jewish influence on the 'byliny', since, as we have noted, these developments are found in Greece, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere.

A definitely Greek influence is proved by the use of the name Etmanuĭl Etmanuĭlovič in some ballads, since this hides the name of the emperor Manuel Comnenus who conducted active intrigues in Galicia about the year 1196. He boasted his descent from the Doukas family, of which Digenis Akritas was the most famous scion. The epos exists in a Russian translation (*Devgeniĭ*), but apparently has no importance for the study of Russian ballad origins. Doukas, however, becomes Djuk, a ballad hero; and his surname of Stepanovič seems to be an acknowledgement of St. Stephen of Hungary's prowess. The Indian kingdom of Djuk Stepanovič, which so far eclipsed that of Kiev, corresponds to the kingdom of Prester John, in which Manuel showed much interest. From the Alexander legend the ballad-mongers perhaps took the idea of giving the magician Vol'ga a snake for father; Nizami reports a conversation between Alexander and a ploughman of exceptional beauty, which offers an analogy to the conversation between Vol'ga and Mikula (Speranskii, *Vol'ga i Mikula*). Veselovskii devotes a whole essay to working out the correspondences between the ballads of *Saur Lebanidovič* and the Cappadocian ballad of *Amouris*. The Tugarin, who was overcome by Aljoša Popovič (Speranskii, *Aljoša i Tugarin*), has been identified as the Tugorhan, chief of the Polovcy in the late eleventh century, who

became reconciled to the rulers of Kiev; this piece has strongly influenced a similar ballad concerning Il'ja Muromec (Speranskii, *Il'ja i Idolišče*), of which the earlier group of versions set the duel in Constantinople. Il'ja's battle with his son (Speranskii, *Boj Il'ja s synom*) calls to mind the Greek ballad of *Tsamados*, as also the history of the Esthonian Kavvi-ali, of the Persian Rustem, of the German Hildebrand, and of the ancient Ulysses and Telegonos, without it being possible to assign a precise source for the Russian version.

The Greek stream crossed the lands of the Southern Slavs. In some particulars the Russian minstrels resemble those of Bulgaria. The importance they assign to snakes and to swan-women, who are witches, is perhaps common Slavonic; and the same may be the case of the approximation between the marvellous ploughman Mikula and Marko Kraljević, who ploughed up the sultan's highway. The Czechs also had their ploughman-hero: Přemysl. The ballad of *Mihailo Potyk Ivanovič* is a complex of many motifs, but the most important have Bulgarian parallels. The name belongs to the St. Michael of Batak in southern Bulgaria, who fought with a lake-infesting dragon who exacted a tribute of children (in fact, who borrowed a feat from St. George, as St. George had done from Perseus). His relics worked miracles, and they were removed in 1206 to the Bulgarian capital at Tirnovo; the date must serve as the 'terminus a quo' of his reputation in foreign parts. One of Mihailo Potyk's adventures is thus a dragon-fight; the other motif is that of the faithless wife who sides with her husband's enemy. She is a Solomonic and Samsonic character; but the working out of the Russian ballad is closely akin to the Bulgarian *Iskren* and *Milica* and the Yugoslav *Banović Strahinja*.

We have seen that the Germans who composed *Ortnit* and the Dietrich romances were interested in Russian oral literature to the extent of learning that Il'ja and Vladimir were representative figures. It is the same group of romances which offers a number of parallels to the fictions of the 'byliny', and though the affinities are not so close as to be decisive, they sum up to the probability of a definite German influence on their formation. With *Ortnit* go in the *Heldenbuch* also *Hugdietrich*, *Wolfdietrich*, and the *Rosengarten*; the whole group of poems is preoccupied with the legendary history of Greece and Italy (though *Ortnit* is so only by the accident that Holmgard, the Old Norse name for Novgorod, had

been supposed to refer to the Garda Lake). With the adventures of Dietrich or Thidrek, in that saga, there go also several other romances or strings of adventures: the affairs of Vilkinaland and Pulaland, i.e. Lusatia and the Ukraine, are a main interest. Samson's history is drawn into the Dietrich complex, together with that of Detlieb or Detlev the Dane, who grew very slowly into heroism, and then, taking leave of his parents, set out to conquer many robbers, especially the bandit Sigurd. Among the 'byliny' we find Samson, and the slow-developing Il'ja, whose first exploits are against robbers, especially the great highwayman Solovei the Nightingale. Hildebrand is a leading figure in the *Thiðrekssaga* next to the king himself; his one great adventure is repeated in the career of Il'ja of Murom. Svjatogor, who cannot lift a small purse which in reality contains the weight of the earth, or Vol'ga in other versions, resembles the Scandinavian Thor who could not lift the Midgard Cat. The ballad of *Dobrynja and Aljoša* is certainly related to the German *Moringen*; and the ballad-novelette in which he casts doubt on the chastity of the Petroviči's sister (Speranskii, *Aljoša i sestra Petrovičei*) reproduces in part the Imogen story, of Italian origin; it is to be found also in the Greek ballad of *Maurianos*, so that there is no way of determining how it entered Russia. Its foreign origin is, at least, assured.

Into another set of parallels I am unable to enter. Among the Tatars and Georgians of the Caucasus tales have been encountered precisely corresponding to the plots of leading 'byliny'. The instances are given by Keltujala, but he does not inform us why we should consider them models rather than copies of the Russian poems. Concerning these latter we can affirm that the genre is old, even though we may not be able to assign dates to individual pieces. The 'byliny' undoubtedly reached their apogee in the sixteenth century, when the ballads of Ivan the Terrible were composed in the best style; they were substantially complete by the seventeenth. The Caucasian parallels were gathered after the ballads had been assembled by scholars in the nineteenth century, and we have little cause to deem them old. They are, one might say, too close; too close to allow for the divergences which lapse of years brings in oral tradition. Their existence may, therefore, be but one phase of the dispersal of the 'byliny'.

For the 'byliny' have been dispersed from their centre, like the ballads of other European countries, but their migration has

covered a far wider area and is thus more imposing. In Kiev and the Ukraine, the original home of their heroes and of some of their motifs, they are quite unknown. A new kind of ballad-poetry, of western origin, reigns in their stead. There may never have been Ukrainian 'byliny', but only a more courtly kind of verse. The ballads are Muscovite, but they are not now to be found in any numbers in Moscow. The institution of serfdom seems to have been almost as fatal to them as education has been elsewhere. It drew the classes apart; the rich sought other amusements, the poor invented vulgar ballads of buffoonery. The 'byliny'—so flourishing in Ivan the Terrible's capital—now live vigorously to the north of the great forested belt, where no great accumulations of wealth are possible, but a hard and healthy struggle for livelihood occupies all men equally. There, in the long winter pause, the visit of the blind singer brings an audience from all the district. It is not a paid profession, since the singer generally has some other; but the entertainer is rewarded with gifts, and still more with universal respect. So it is by the shores of Lake Onega, in Olonec, Archangel, Perm, and Siberia that the best 'byliny' have been gathered; 'byliny' which record the names of personages dead eight centuries previously, together with some particulars of the geography and history of the Ukraine. Other ballads have been gathered on the line of the Volga, and the tales circulating in the Caucasus complete a magnificent arc drawn from the ancient capital of the Vladimirs.

The historical school of interpreters, identifying names in the 'byliny', see in these poems a storehouse of ancient facts. Another two schools study the plots, which are fabulous; they differ according as they find analogies in the west or the east. A fourth group was encouraged to apply mythological methods by the enigmatic figures Volh or Vol'ga, Mikula, and Svjatogor. Volh or Vol'ga (Rybnikov 3, 38, &c.) was born to a young princess and a snake father in a green garden when the sun first shone. He was a prodigious child:

Now when Volh was seven years old,  
his little mother sent him out to learn,  
and in a twinkling learned he grammarye;  
she set him down to write with a pen,  
and in a twinkling writing came to him.  
Now when Volh was ten years old,  
by that time Volh had learned the highest cunning;

the first craft he had learned  
 was to enclose himself in a glittering falcon;  
 the second art he had learned  
 was to enclose himself in a grey wolf;  
 the third art Volh had learned  
 was to enclose himself in a wild bull with golden horns.  
 So when Volh had reached his twelfth year,  
 this Volh began to gather himself a meinie;  
 he gathered his meinie three years,  
 he gathered to his meinie seven thousands;  
 he himself—Volh—was in his fifteenth year  
 and all his meinie was fifteen years old.

(Speranskiĭ, *Volh Vseslav'evič i Inděiskoe Carstvo.*)

He went to Kiev, and there learned of the threat of invasion by the 'Indian' tsar. Shifting his shape, he went to the tsar's tent, overheard his plans; shifting again, he gnawed his weapons so that they were useless; and, in another disguise, safely returned to Russia. The same shape-shiftings were used by Prince Roman Mitreevič in defeating a Lithuanian invasion (Rybnikov 45). In another ballad Vol'ga (Speranskiĭ, *Vol'ga i Mikula*) encounters the prodigious ploughman, who can plough faster than a horse can gallop and who encloses the weight of the world in a small bag. The same bag is found in a ballad of Svjatogor (Speranskiĭ, *Svjatogor i tjaga zemnaja*), who is the hero of his own marriage, of an encounter with Il'ja of Murom, and of death by burial alive.

The historical expert sees in Vol'ga the historical Oleg, who made a great raid on Constantinople in the tenth century. It was a naval expedition, and so utterly unlike that of Vol'ga, who is evidently concerned with the defence of Kiev against the Tatars; nor are the enemy precisely Tatars, since their 'Indian' Empire is that of Prester John borrowed from the ballads of *Djuk Stepanovič*. As a shape-shifting hunter he corresponds to Vänämöinen in the *Kalevala* and to the whole scheme of sympathetic magic implied by Finnish hunting songs. His name of Volh seems to be connected with the Volhov river, and with the worship of the thunder-god Perun. In one of his exploits he resembles Thor; in his general character he seems to be a fire-god like Loki. As for Mikula, his name is borrowed from St. Nicholas, but his qualities are those of a Slavic Triptolemus. Svjatogor is obviously 'Holy Mountain'; but which? If it be a place-name from the Black Sea coast, near



the mouth of the Donetz, it would lie in Khazar territory. Svjatogor and Samson tend to change roles in the 'byliny', since both are giants, the one a pagan and the other a Hebrew. The historical interpreters go so far as to see in Svjatogor a type of the Jewish Khazar kingdom ('obraz hazarskago carstva', as Keltujala says). But such identifications are very doubtful. Svjatogor might as easily be a personification of Mount Athos.

Older critics were inclined to see in these poems an older stratum of the 'byliny', since the heroes are only loosely related to Kiev. Il'ja inherits some of the mountainous strength of Svjatogor, and Dobrynja marries Mikula's daughter Nastašja. This view is now abandoned. There are doubtless old elements in the ballads, but they themselves may be comparatively modern. That of *Volh and the Indian Empire* must be younger than *Djuk*, and Svjatogor's association with Il'ja comes after that hero's rise. A hero named in the ballads is Kolyvan, who has the qualities of Svjatogor-Samson. He is evidently the Esthonian Kalev or Kalev's son, and the name is derived from Finnish 'kallio' 'rock, cliff'.

The cycle of Il'ja of Murom, apart from his encounter with Svjatogor, contains some seven main branches. First comes his cure. For thirty-three years of his life he had been unable to walk. Cured by three pilgrims (as Martyn was cured by St. Glëb and St. Boris), he took leave of his parents, giving them proofs of his heroic strength. He made three forays against robbers, and then attacked the great Nightingale, Solovei. In this part of his career the hero has had the same history as Detlieb. A famous duel is that he fought against Sokol'nik, or, in other versions, against his own son; a second he fought against the giant Idolišče, in Tsarigrad according to the older group of ballads. Unjust treatment at Vladimir's court caused Il'ja to withdraw in indignation, but he fought a tremendous battle against Kalin and the Tatars, when most of the Russian 'bogatyrs' succumbed. The robber Nightingale was associated with the stream called Smorodina (where there were place-names Solov'inoe and Devjatidub'e) in the region of Chernigov. Il'ja is clearly not an inhabitant of Kiev, and his attraction to the Kievite cycle may be a reflection of the close association of these two cities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Dobrynja Nikitič and Aljoša Popovič are two heroes who are represented as younger than the 'Old Cossack' of Murom, and

somewhat inferior in strength. Dobrynja is pre-eminent for courtesy, but Aljoša has a less reputable career, perhaps owing to the prejudice against priests' sons. The two names were associated by their death at the battle of Kalka in 1224: Dobrynja of the Golden Girdle came from Rjazan and Aleksandr the Priest's Son from Rostov. There was another Dobrynja, uncle of Vladimir I, who may also be commemorated under this name. He acted as Vladimir's proxy in his marriage to Rognêda of Polock, just as Dobrynja does with Apraksja in the ballads. Some eight feats stand to the credit of Dobrynja; he is, indeed, the centre of a ballad-cycle as complete as that of Il'ja. First he leaves home to fight a serpent; then he is intercessor for Vladimir with Apraksja's father; thirdly he kills the witch Marina's 'dove' and suffers enchantment into a bull; then with Vasilii Kazimirov he takes Russian tribute to the Golden Horde, to Batu, and performs remarkable feats of strength in the presence of the Tatars; fifthly, he returns to find his wife about to marry Aljoša Popovič, and prevents the match; then he himself marries the Amazon Nastašja—it is not quite certain whether Dobrynja had one or two wives, since the ballads are not congruent; and seventhly and eighthly, he fights duels with Il'ja and with Dunai. Aljoša, for his part, fought against the snake-hero Tugarin and made him a friend, and he cast doubts on the virtue of the Petrovič's sister, when the brothers boasted about her in their cups. Tugarin is apparently the historical Tugorhan of the eleventh century, who was reconciled to the rulers of Kiev and entered into a marriage alliance with them; but Batu is of the thirteenth century, Vasilii Kazimirov of the fifteenth, and Marina of the seventeenth. The marriage of 'bogatyř' and amazon is a theme encountered in Caucasian legends, and also in Greek 'tragoudia'. The killing of Marina's lover corresponds to what Jewish tradition, rather than the Bible, says concerning David and Bathsheba's husband. The dragon-fight may be borrowed from Aljoša's chief exploit. The Moringer and Imogen motifs are exploited in one episode of each hero's life. A Ukrainian ballad uses the Jonah motif for Aleksëi Popovič (Antonovič and Dragomanov 44). Čurilo Plenkovič and Djuk Stepanovič are associated figures. They are both Galicians, the one supreme for beauty, the other for wealth. When brought into competition the victor is Djuk. Some memory of the former remains in Galicia (Antonovič and Dragomanov 18) in an enigmatic lyric. Žurilo is richly attended by maidens:

Goes Žurilo out of gates,  
 after him three hundred maids:  
 Wait, Žurilo, wait, my lord,  
 where's your faithful troop and ward?

Then follow verses that seem to have wandered in from another song, but Žurilo appears at the close, accompanied by a certain Ksenja, keeper of the stack-yard:

Everywhere Žurilo goes,  
 barley corn springs up and grows,  
 underneath fair Ksenja's feet,  
 sprouting up are ears of wheat.

The 'byliny' dwell on the prodigious display of wealth whereby Čurilo bought his place at Vladimir's court, and the beauty by which he rose too rapidly in Apraksja's favour. His death came at the hands of a certain Bermjata, earned by an intrigue with the old man's wife. As for Djuk, the Kievite court were inclined to laugh at his display of wealth, and Čurilo was particularly pettish; but an embassy to the 'Indian' Empire discovered that Djuk had spoken no more than the truth. The ballads of these two heroes took form probably in the fifteenth century.

There are many minor heroes in the Kievite cycle, some of whom have been attracted from other towns to Kiev. In *Suhman*, *Dunaï*, and *Don and Nêpra* there is an aetiological element, since the events recorded explain the origin of streams. They are otherwise associated with Kiev; the third is an imitation of the second, and the second is usually worked into the cycle of Dobrynja; the first appears to be based on the battle against Mamaï and his Tatars in 1380 on the Kulikov plain, by the river Nêprjadva. *Saur Lebani-dovič* (also known as *Mihail* or *Ivan Daniločič*) is not actually attached to the Kiev cycle, and has wandered in from Greece (*Amouris*). *Vasiliŭ the Drunkard*, who saves Kiev from the Tatars by suddenly leaving his potations, bears some relation to the siege of Kiev in 1240 by Batu, but has suffered revision at Moscow in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. *Mihailo Potyk* comes in part, as we have seen, from Bulgaria. *Prince Roman*, who cannot be exactly identified, but was one of two princes of that name reigning in Galicia and Volynia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, has three ballads to his credit. Other heroes are Glêb Volod'evič, Mihail Kazarinov, Ivan 'the merchant's son', Hoten, and Stavr. Stavr (Rybnikov 14) came to Kiev and fell into

boasting of his wife, so that Vladimir detained him and would not set him free till she came in person. Being wise, she concealed her sex. She came in the character of an envoy from Greece, wrestled with all the heroes and overthrew them. She then demanded to wrestle with Stavr, and after conquering him she made herself known. Her strength was due to her race, for she was Vasilissa, daughter of the prodigious Mikula. Stavr of Novgorod is known to have lived in 1118. The adventure that befell him is that of the German *Alexander von Metz*, who is called in the ballads of Germany and Scandinavia *The Count of Rome*. The Russian, however, was not yoked to a plough, and his wife did not disguise herself as a minstrel. In the Danish ballad *Sister frees Brother* (UDV 170, 172, Arwidsson 97) there is no mention of ploughing, and the lady relies in the Russian fashion on brute force. These stories are probably related, but it would be hard to say how. The legend of Joseph and Zuleikha, followed by that of Benjamin's cup, gives us the pilgrim's ballad of *Forty Pilgrims* (Rybnikov 13, 40, &c., Speranskiĭ, *Sorok Kalik s Kalikoju*); and there is a strange history of Solomon in *Tsar Solomon* and *Solomon's Father's Dream* (Rybnikov 49, 50, 94), of Jewish origin.

Owing to the attraction to Kiev of heroes like Stavr, the Novgorod cycle has only two names: Sadko the Rich Merchant, and Vasilii Buslaev. Both have been surely identified in the twelfth century; the one was an administrator, the other left a permanent record of his wealth in the stone church he built. But the atmosphere of their adventures belongs to the city at the height of her commercial prosperity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, or even to her decline in the sixteenth. Their ballads are more satisfying than those of Kiev inasmuch as the plots are firmer. Sadko, the Rich Merchant, was at first a fiddler who gained his wealth from the tsar of Lake Ilmen, he then equipped a splendid trading fleet for a supreme venture. His sins, like Jonah's, raised a storm, and he was cast into the sea. By his marvellous playing on the lyre he kept the Tsar of the Sea dancing so long that he had to release his victim. In prose tales Sadko learns the value of salt. The ballad exalts the worth of the minstrel's profession above that of rich merchants the more effectively for being set in commercial Novgorod. Sadko's early poverty contrasts brilliantly with his later wealth, which is described with oriental hyperbole; but his wealth was gained by his playing and later preserved by it from total loss. The opening is:

And so it was in famous Novgorod,  
and such a player on the lyre was Sadko,  
but to him there was no store of boundless wealth,  
but he merely attended noble banquets,  
so made he merry for merchants and for boyars,  
he gave them pleasure in their noble banquets.  
For one whole day Sadko was invited to no noble banquet,  
for a second day also he was not invited to a noble banquet,  
and for a third day was he not invited to a noble banquet.  
So now this is what occurred to Sadko,  
Sadko betook him to Ilmen, to the lake,  
and sat him down on a blue burning stone,  
and began to play upon his clear-sounding lyre,  
and played from morn till eventide. (Gil'ferding 70.)

When we remember that the Finnish magicians were accustomed to sit on a special stone to work enchantment, we are the less surprised that the tsar of the lake should appear to Sadko and make him the richest man in Novgorod. Collecting this wealth for a great trading venture, Sadko took ship with his companions, and a storm burst upon them. To calm the tempest, Sadko was cast overboard with his 'gusli', and sank to the temple of the Tsar of the Sea. The Tsar asked him to play, and Sadko's playing is the Russian version of the widespread motif of the power of music:

And so began Sadko to play on his clear-sounding lyre,  
and so now began the Tsar of the Sea to dance in the blue sea,  
and all the blue sea went a-capering with him,  
and a wave swept down on the blue sea  
and began to shatter so many black ships on the blue sea,  
and many rich merchants perished on the blue sea.

As for Vasilii Buslaev, he stands for the civil strife endemic in Novgorod. An overbearing noble, he gathered a *meinie* (*družina*), and insulted the rich citizens at his banquets. A revolt against him was led by his godfather, a monk from the Andronova monastery. The description of this personage, wearing the huge monastery bell for a helmet, and of the encounter with his godson, is an excellent sample of Russian ballad humour:

Then seized he a bell, four hundredweights heavy,  
seized it and clamped it on his head,  
and sat him then upon his goodly steed,  
so went he out to the little stream the Volhov,

to that bridge that spans the Volhov  
and he called loudly on the bridge of the Volhov,  
and he clamoured in a thunderous tone:

'Ho thou Vasil'juško Buslav'evič,  
thou little child, do not gallop far,  
take not the road straight ahead.'

So then Vasil'juško made reply:

'Ho thou then, ho my godfather,  
in thy old age art thou so noisy!

I gave thee no egg on Christ's Easter-day,  
but now I give thee an egg on St. Peter's day.'

So swiftly Vasil'juško leapt in under him,  
and smote him with his club upon the bell,  
and shattered the bell into two fragments;  
and the next blow he let fly at his head,  
and beat him down into the Volhov stream,  
and with him beat down his goodly steed.

(Gil'ferding 54.)

In another ballad, Vasilii makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, completing it successfully; but he obstinately insists on jumping over a great stone, and kills himself thereby. A suggestion made is that this pilgrimage and death may have been modelled on Ivan the Terrible's pilgrimage to St. Cyril's monastery in Novgorod in 1570—an event perhaps celebrated in some strictly historical poem.

In addition to the novelistic matter in these two cycles of Kiev and Novgorod, there are a few narratives among the 'byliny' which are not given a quasi-historical setting. *The untold Dream* (Rybnikov 35) is pure folk-tale. A son dreams that his father will drink his bath-water, and is so shocked that he refuses to explain to his father, to a baron, or even to the tsar, being finally imprisoned; then when the tsar goes on an expedition, the youth saves his life and marries the princess. *Nine Brothers and their Sister* (Rybnikov 37) has a plot akin to the Scandinavian *Herr Truel's Daughters* (UDV 164). Nine robbers attack and dishonour a girl who proves to be their sister. *Nastašja Politovskaja* or *The Youth and the prudent Woman* (Rybnikov 33, 47) is distantly related, perhaps, to the Spanish *Count Vélez* and *Count Claros*, since the ballad hinges on the boasting of a youth in a tavern. He claims to have made a conquest of the princess, whose chamberlain he is, and it is only by her intervention that he escapes execution. *Mitriř Vasil'evič and Domna Alexandrovna* (Rybnikov 92) is a private tragedy of a type common

in the west of Europe but rare in Russia. Domna freely mocked her wooer, but was ready enough to marry him, despite the bad omens her mother perceived. The omens proved to be true: she died as Mitrii approached the house, and her mother died with her. Mitrii could only kill himself, reproaching (for some reason or other) his sister for being the cause of the disaster. There are a number of other odd ballads of this sort, some of them being frankly vulgar and full of buffoonery. They represent the decay of the genre in central Russia.

Thanks to the fact that romantic matter has been taken up by the cycles of Kiev and Novgorod and given a setting which is, in some part, undoubtedly historical, the notion of a historical ballad is somewhat ambiguous in Russia. There are, however, many important 'byliny' which arise directly out of the events they relate, so that not only the names or some details can be verified, but the whole transaction. As in other countries, these historical pieces give us the chronology of ballad composition. The 'byliny' of the older cycles, we have seen, could not have arisen before the downfall of Kiev, though they may rely on 'veliçanija' or courtly narratives of an older age; nor do the majority of them reach their present development before the fifteenth or the sixteenth century. This same development is seen in the historical pieces. The first we encounter is *The Princes of T'er* (Speranskiĭ, *Šelkan Dudent'evič*), referring to an event of the year 1327. The style of such poems is more simple and literal than in the old cycles, but the influence of these upon historical matter is evident in the three pieces on *Prince Roman* of Galicia, which have become entirely novelesque. *Avdot'ja of Rjazan* (Rybnikov 182) doubtless refers to the Tatar sieges of 1365 or 1377, though the city was attacked also four times in the fifteenth century. It relates that Bahmet the Turk destroyed Kazan (meaning Rjazan) and took forty thousand prisoners. Avdot'ja resolved to save at least one of them, but her wit charmed the sultan into releasing them all.

It was with the great tragedies that marked the reigns of Ivan the Terrible and Boris Godunov that the historical 'byliny' reached their highest development in style and theme. These pieces are worthy to stand beside the best work of the older cycles. The capture of Kazan in 1552 opens this series, followed by the more domestic themes of the tsaritsa's death (1559), Ivan's remarriage (1561), the attempted slaying of the tsarevich (1581), and the

Terrible's death (1584). The flight of the Crimean Khan in 1572 and Ermak's conquest of Siberia in 1581-4 are the most important external events remembered by the ballad-poets. The attempt on Fedor's life (Rybnikov 19, 31, 55) is the most impressive of all the historical ballads, uniting as it does the utmost horror at the depravity of the crime with breathless suspense as to whether it will be actually perpetrated. Credit for stay of execution was given by some later revisers to the Romanov family. What appears to be a transformation of this ballad is the remarkable *Sunflower Kingdom* (Rybnikov 36), which only Rjabnin among the modern reciters could remember; it may, of course, be an independent myth, but the names suggest that it is history reduced to romantic legend. Tsar Vasiliĭ Mihailovič, by the engines given him by two artisans, flies to Sunflower Land and there has his secret amours with the princess, who is Mařja the White Swan (known from the ballads of Mihailo Potyk and others). Thus Fedor Ivanovič is born—according to the name, his father would be Ivan, not Vasiliĭ: in history Vasiliĭ was Ivan's father. Fedor returned to Russia bearing the insignia of his royal birth, and entered the taverns to carouse. At this time the tsar was about to marry Anna Dmitrievična, and had issued a curfew order to discourage brawls. Under this order Fedor was apprehended, and about to be executed, when the tsar recognized his insignia, remembered his old love, and took to himself the Sunflower Princess, leaving Anna to Fedor. The name of Mary or Marina became the conventional name of a witch in this period, being derived from Marina Mniszek, the False Demetrius's wife; it intruded itself into the oldest cycles. The age of Ivan the Terrible was not completed until the downfall of Boris Godunov, and the line of great ballads includes *Grigoriĭ Otrep'ev*, or the False Demetrius, of 1606, one on Šuiskiĭ in 1610, and a touching lament in the mouth of Kseňja, Boris Godunov's daughter.

After this great epoch the line of historical 'byliny' extends without interruption to the middle of the nineteenth century; but they have not the old power. In the seventeenth century they celebrate the capture of Azov (1637), the parliament which saved Smolensk (1653), the expedition to Riga (1656), the rebellion of Steňka Razin (1670), &c. In the eighteenth century the reign of Peter the Great is covered by ballads as numerous as those of Ivan the Terrible, but of a more vulgar tone. Though a monarch suited by temper and achievement to be a hero of popular tales and songs, Peter was



responsible for introducing those western and literate influences which split the community of rich and poor who had delighted in the 'byliny' of an earlier age. His birth, suppression of the Streltzi, his victory of Poltava (also sung by a Finnish minstrel), and his end, are the principal points of his cycle.

After Peter the Great the wars of the eighteenth century continued to furnish material for ballad-journalists; for instance, the Swedish war of 1743 and the first Turkish war of 1769. The central figure is that of Catherine II, who was also the first Russian ruler to extend the web of her intrigues into the Balkan peninsula. There is a somewhat naïve Bulgar ballad about her (Dozon 42), in which she is said to have defeated seventy-seven discourteous beys, who did not let her have time to do up her hair. To these pieces correspond also the numerous Ukrainian political poems of the same period which have been collected by Dragomanov.<sup>1</sup> The ballad-minstrels were still active when Napoleon I launched his great attack on Russia. The 'dog of an enemy', king Napoleon, is represented as collecting an army and ships, and sending a letter to the tsar to demand a lodging in the Russian palace; the tsar might have acceded to the demand, but for the indignant refusal by Kutozov; Kutozov promises to prepare delicacies of bombs and cannons for the French guest.

## 2. *Ukrainia*

An account of Russian narrative verse cannot be closed without some mention of the 'dumi' and other ballads of the Ukraine,<sup>2</sup> if only because of the strange paradox that overshadows them. The Ukrainians are the original Russians (Ruś), though the name has been commuted in part of the territory to 'Ruthenians'. Thirty million strong, they have their own Little Russian dialect, and occupy not only the south of Russia but also parts of Poland and the former Austrian Galicia. In particular, they hold all the ground consecrated by the Kievite cycles of Great Russian 'byliny'. The

<sup>1</sup> M. Dragomanov, *Politični Pisni Ukrajinskogo Narody, xviii-xix st.*, 2 vols., Geneva, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> References are to V. Antonovič and M. Dragomanov, *Istoričeskija Pěsni Malorusskago Naroda*, Kiev, 1874. M. Dragomanov also published two volumes of historical poems dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which have been already mentioned. There are some useful notes on Ukrainian folk-song in S. Smal-Stocky, *Ukrainisches Lesebuch* (Sammlung Göschen), Berlin-Leipzig, 1927.

'byliny' profess to tell us tales of the Ukraine, which are almost wholly unknown in that region. At most mere wisps of that tradition can be grasped. There is some vague memory of Il'ja associated with place-names in the Ukraine. Žurilo or Džurilo, hero of a dancing song, is probably to be identified with Čurilo Plenkovič, and both with a family of boyars who took a prominent part in the affairs of Przemyśl, Cholm, Galicia, and Podolia from the end of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth (18). There is a game in dialogue in which mention is made of a Prince Roman (12). This Roman may be the Galician prince Roman Mstislavič of the early thirteenth century, who (if not another) may have been the hero of the 'bylina' of *Prince Roman and Mary the White Swan*. But these are slight indications, and they do not imply any real knowledge of the Kievite cycle in the country round Kiev.

The fact is that the Ukraine suffered the worst shock of the Tatar invasions, so destructive as to blot out nearly all memory of the glorious past. Her folk-literature begins a new epoch with the ruin of the capital in 1240. Unable to find a new centre of gravity, the Ukraine did not recover until the Polish kings began to intervene by reason of their forward policy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They brought with them the seeds of a definitely western culture. Rhyme is a characteristic of most Ukrainian folk-songs, even those of narrative cast. The lyrical element predominates, as in Poland, and there are several narratives of an obviously international type. Ukrainian metrics have some interesting features, but none that mark them off from the general practice of western Europe, outside the 'dumi'. There are the usual love-songs (boy and girl, man and wife, hate, betrayal, death and lonely survival). Other pieces follow the calendar of ceremonial occasions: Christmas (koljadki), New Year (ščedrivki), May Day (vesnjanki), Easter (gaïvki), Midsummer (kupal'ni pisni), Harvest (obžinkovi pisni), together with marriages and funerals. A conspicuous feature is the number of dance songs (kolomiïki, kozački, sabadaški, čabaraški), as in Poland. There are various lengths of line, from octosyllables to sixteen-syllabled lines, but all this verse is subject to measure and to rhyme, generally in couplets. Whatever elements of narrative there may be, they are interrupted by refrains and by repetitions and the movement is lyrical.

The 'dumi' alone stand out from the mass. They are normally

rhymed in couplets, though the rhyme may be imperfect or fail altogether; but the length of the line is entirely free. They are devoted to narratives, but are not the only medium for narrative verse. A twenty-stringed lute (the 'kobza') is used for them, the instrumentalist filling in the interstices of the lines with improvisations. An attempt has been made to devise a system of scansion common to the 'dumi' and 'byliny', but there is here even less evidence for the recurrence of certain stresses and pauses. The two types are not identical, but, in view of the metrical irregularity also apparent in *Igor's Expedition*, it seems natural to believe that the 'byliny' and the 'dumi' are independent derivatives from the old prosody of Kiev.

The themes of the 'dumi' are modern and historical. They are concerned with expeditions against the Turks, the complaints and escapes of prisoners, and the Cossack against the Poles. The style and treatment are generally undistinguished, and even plebeian. One misses the supernatural, which diversifies the action of some of the best 'byliny'. *Aleksēi Popovič and the Storm in the Black Sea* (44) is a Jonah legend, marred by an excess of words. The crimes to which this unpardonable sinner confessed are trivial—they include irreverence and failure to say his prayers—and the whole piece is in painful contrast to the vivid imagination that shapes the song of *Sadko*. The name of the hero is also that of one of the 'bogatyrs'; but it means no more than Alec the Priest's Son, so that one cannot be certain of the identity. Aljoša Popovič, however, was, as we have seen, involved in one or two serious pieces of ballad wrongdoing. The escapes are those of Samuil Koška from Trebizond (45) and of three brothers from Azov (35), the latter being raised above the commonplace by a dash of tragedy. The best of the 'dumi' is that of *Marusja Bogoslavka* (46). The plot is very simple. The lady has herself turned Turk by entering a Turkish harem (doubtless as a captive), but on Easter Eve, while her lord is at prayers, she frees five hundred Cossacks from his dungeons, sending by them a hopeless message to her parents. There is a naïve but effective use of psychology and indubitable pathos in the ending; Marusja saved others, herself she could not save:

This request alone I make you, pass not by Boguslav's town.  
 To my father dear and mother make this news known:  
     that my father dear grieve not,  
 alienate not store of treasure, ground or plot,

that no store of wealth he save,  
 neither me, Marusja the slave,  
 child of Boguslav the priest,  
 evermore seek to release,  
 for become a Turk I am, I'm become a Mussulman,  
 for the Turk's magnificence,  
 and for my concupiscence.

It is suggested that the case of Marusja Bogoslavka would be that of Roxolana (Rossa), wife of Suleiman I, who seems to have been a priest's daughter from Galicia (d. 1558). Something of the old 'bogatyř' spirit breathes in *Cossack Golota's Duel with a Tatar* (43).

For the most part we are dealing with fragments in regular metres on quite general themes. It is only possible to identify a name or an allusion by chance. An adventurous and romantic scholarship has thus room to work out identifications, as Chodzko did, stretching back to a remote pagan antiquity, with the dynasty of Rurik as almost a middle point in the series. Dragomanov, though more prudent, assigns his first twenty items to 'the age of the "družiny" and princes'. These pieces are almost entirely dancing-songs, and not at all easy to interpret in an exact fashion. Some of them mention names of persons or places. In one the dancers propose to sail down the silent Don and attack Constantinople; others speak of sieges of Constantinople, Lwow, Mogila, Kamenec, Mier, &c., the Greeks and others being specified as enemies. If these are references to real events, then they take us back to dates in the remote middle ages. The classical attack on Constantinople was that of Oleg in the early tenth century. But in the absence of narrative context or other guarantees of historicity, there is nothing to compel us to believe these sieges were more than figments of fancy. Take, for instance, *The Duel with the Turkish King* (6). A Russian hero, it is alleged, seized a Turkish (or Czech) king and would not release him. Turkish sultans appeared at the head of large armies only in 1620 and 1672, and no Russian gained then the 'spolia opima'. There is no way of connecting the allegations with any Czech king. The 'spolia opima' were won by Svjatopolk Izjaslavič in 1103, when he captured the Polovcy leader Khan Belduž. The ballad might be emended in this sense, but there is not really any reason to believe that this is more than an imagined case. So, too, with a dance which speaks of the arrest of some one called Ivan while dancing (11).

It is more easy to believe that some of the songs which relate to Tatar devastations may contain a trace of the contemporary horror roused by Batu. This form of savagery, it is true, continued to be present in the experience of Ukrainians until the eighteenth century was well advanced; but doubtless the first barbarians set the model of pitiless ruin:

On the plain a birch tree lies,  
on the birch a cuckoo cries,  
questioning the birch I ween:  
Wherefore, birch-tree, art not green?  
—Green and sweet how could I be?  
Tatars have stood under me.  
Cleft by sword, my twigs down came,  
as they stirred the brilliant flame,  
with their spears they turned the ground,  
by my roots the water found,  
watering their horses round.

(Smal-Stockyj, p. 71.)

There exists, at all events, a Ukrainian prose legend of the fall of Kiev (15). The hero was a certain Mihailik, so strong that he could shoot an arrow from Kiev into the Tatar camp; the Tatars demanded his surrender so as to deprive the city of its defence; and when the prince of Kiev was likely to comply, Mihailik unhinged the Golden Gates and carried them through the Tatar host to Constantinople. Another famous bowyer was *Baida* (40), who, rather than submit to the Grand Turk, shot three arrows which killed the sultan, sultana, and a princess. The word means 'idler, reveller'. The root idea is thus the same as we find in the 'bylina' of *Vasilū the Drunkard*; but it has been proposed, on not very conclusive evidence, to identify this hero with a 'starost' of the Cherkassians who did much harm to the Turks of the Crimea, the Ukraine, and Moldavia between 1556 and 1563.

The remaining narratives are such as might be encountered anywhere in Europe, and must in some cases be regarded as borrowed goods in the Ukraine. Some indication has already been given of them in the paragraphs dealing with Poland, since the legends of Polish Galicia are also Ruthenian. There is a Ukrainian *Girl who went to War* (69), but it is somewhat inconsequential. The usual conclusion has been lost, and the ballad has been contaminated with *The Duel with a Turkish King* (6 c), in which a hero neglects

the excellent advice to keep in the middle of the army, exposed neither in front nor behind. The ballad exists in White Russia also, and has closest affinity with the Czech form. *The Girl ransomed by her Lover from the Turk* (33) is yet another example of the power of true love. *The Robber Boyar* (20) is a bandit whose bride has to wash out bloody cloths, and sees in one of them her brother's hand; the story is found also in Czechoslovakia, and originated probably in Serbia (Karadžić i. 668, Sušil 139). From the Balkans came *The Brother purchases his Sister as a Slave* (63); and a *Father (or Brother) betrays his Daughter (or Sister) to a Turk* (65, 66) is a Serbian theme borrowed probably by the Galician Ruthenians from the Czechs (Sušil 128). The cases are distinguished by the names of the actors, since the father and daughter are called Andriečko and Mariečka, but the brother and sister are Roman and Olena. The verses are arranged in octosyllabic couplets.

The Ukrainian folk-songs now extant thus belong wholly, or as far as sure inferences can be made, to the post-Kievite era; some may be contemporary with the great Tatar raids, but otherwise the oldest evidence is for the sixteenth century. Brought within the orbit of western civilization by the Poles, the form of their ballads is occidental, apart from the 'dumi'. The themes, save those based on facts, derive from the west or from the Balkans, and in either case a determining factor has been the contiguity of Czechs and Ruthenians in Galicia.

## NOTES

### NOTE A

S. B. Hustvedt, *A Melodic Index of Child's Ballad Tunes*, Berkeley (Cal.), 1936; see the notice in *Modern Language Review*, xxxiii, 1938, pp. 295-7. For my own convenience I have introduced some modifications into Mr. Hustvedt's system, due partly to a wish to simplify it typographically, since it ought to be printed easily, typed without an abnormal keyboard (though I allow myself foreign accents), and written by hand without risk of ambiguity; modifications partly due also to the examination of tunes which are not composed within the limits usual in English balladry.

The names of notes may be obtained by differences of type and capitalization whether in print, on a typewriter (preferably with red and black or blue ribbon), or in handwriting. The middle octave may be represented by Roman letters: c d e f g a b. One can then obtain the names of notes in two octaves below and two above by using large capitals (or underlined capitals), small capitals, roman, italic, italic capitals: C—B c—B c—b c—b C—B. Some of the notes of the highest octave are used by Pelay Briz for his *Cançons de la Terra*, Barcelona-Paris, 1866-87. Generally speaking the range required falls within two octaves named c—b c—b.

The whole tune may then be transcribed by stating (i) the key, (ii) the time, (iii) the unit length of note. A rest of any length is indicated by 'r'.

The key or mode can be stated simply. As for the time, Hustvedt recommends writing the two numbers side by side. For the more complicated Balkan times, involving more than two numbers, a dash or vertical line would be needed between the halves of the fraction.

The unit length is represented by U<sub>4</sub> U<sub>8</sub>, &c., 4 being a crochet, 8 a quaver. Most ballad tunes are best transcribed in these units, but one may also use on occasion a semibreve (U<sub>2</sub>) or semiquaver (U<sub>16</sub>). Each letter of type will therefore be of the length of the unit chosen; for instance, under U<sub>8</sub>, 'c' is a quaver of that pitch. Dots will lengthen the note by one unit of length. Under U<sub>8</sub>, 'c.' is a crochet, and 'c . . .' a semibreve. To write notes of half the unit length, put them in brackets; '(c)' under the same circumstances is a semiquaver. It is not usually desirable to show too many brackets in a transcription, and the main thing to be kept in mind is to give as brief and clear a formula as possible. In some eastern tunes there are very rapid trills, which may be omitted for some purposes, or may be entered in double brackets if necessary. There are notes spaced with intervals a little greater or less than ours, which may be indicated by putting a point above or below the letter. There are also optional trills, of imprecise shape, which may be represented by a line drawn over one or more notes.

Bars must be entered. Vertical lines serve when the bar is certain (|),

dots when uncertain (:). The latter kind are typical of the oldest ballad tunes in the east and west. Hustvedt indicates sharps and flats and naturals by the usual musical signs. These are not on most typewriters, and I find that some confusion may arise through the fact that on staff notation and with Mr. Hustvedt the accidental is entered before the note, but in usual transcription it comes after. I think accents may serve. The acute (´) easily represents a sharp; the grave (`) a flat; and the tittle (˘) a natural, since it was originally a superimposed 'n'.

By these means most simple melodies may be printed or typed within the dimension of a square inch; an enormous saving on the space occupied by staff notation.

The tune so transcribed is characterized by a melodic contour. This contour can be set down in a quasi-algebraical way by counting each rise and fall in semitones, ignoring identical notes. By using roman and italic (or underlined>) numbers one can get symbols for twenty rising semitones: 1-0 1-0, where 'o' is ten and 'o' is twenty. The alphabet gives symbols for twenty-four falling semitones, omitting I and O as liable to confusion with numbers. Actually one only needs about twelve.

These formulas may be used for the whole tune or any part. For purposes of comparison it is enough to give the curve of the first phrase, corresponding to the first line of quatrains or, sometimes, the first hemistich of long divided lines. In a general catalogue Mr. Hustvedt recommends entering in numerical order first, and then in alphabetical order; so tunes in 11 . . . , 12 . . . , 13 . . . , &c., then A1 . . . , A2 . . . , and later AA . . . , AB . . . There would have to be cross-indexing, however, for it happens that the first interval is often the most capricious. Singers make different jumps to reach the same continuing pitch. In this way tunes are sometimes identical, except for the first interval. I am not quite certain whether all tunes which have identical melodic contours under Hustvedt's transcription are in fact identical. The details can be ascertained by consulting the full transcription.

Personally, I find it convenient to indicate in transcription by a blank where each line ends. To make the above clear, I give a transcription and characterization of *God Save the King* (= *My Country 'tis of Thee*) as it would appear on a card-index.

<i>God Save the King</i> 2C12 <i>Church Hymnary</i> 631 <i>1 sharp</i> 44 U2 gga/f (.g)a/ bbc/b(.a)g/ agf/g../ ddd/d(.c)b/ ccc/c(.b)a/ b(cbag)/b(.c)d/ (ec)ba/g../
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## NOTE B

One must admit that this is an explanation 'obscuri per obscuriora'. A considerable number of sung 'byliny' have been collected, but their interpretation is still indefinite. Still the 'byliny' singers actually cope in our own times with a problem superficially similar to that of the Spanish epic minstrels. Some general notions may be put forward tentatively. The lines of 'byliny' are shorter than 9 syllables, or longer. If shorter, there is only one important accent in the line: the last. If longer, there are two. F. E. Korš gave a complicated account of their metre, with the aid of peculiar symbols, in his *Velikoruskija Pěsni zapisannija dla Ričarda Džemsa*, St. Petersburg, 1907, and applied it to *Prince Igor* in his *Slovo o Polku Igorevě*, St. Petersburg, 1909. I have not succeeded in understanding the system. Professor S. Konovalov, who has a markedly rhythmical manner of pronouncing 'byliny', accents the 3rd and 9th syllables, or 3rd, 7th, and 11th, according to the length of the line. This regularity is obtained by adding unaccented syllables or omitting them in certain cases, and there is no doubt that it corresponds in that respect to the practice of the popular singers. So

V slavnom velikom Novegradě

becomes in recitation

V slaavnóm velikom Nòvegrádě,

with main accents on the 3rd and 9th. There are many lines which are sung to an irregular time, but with two bars, which rather resemble the two chief stresses of Yugoslav 'pesme'. The first of these stresses may not occur, but still the sense of measured utterance is maintained by the second, as also doubtless by subtle adaptations of tempo. Each line is freely improvised. Generally speaking, the melodic curve rises to the first bar; it then oscillates on two or three notes, and descends after the second main accent to a point lower than the beginning. Thus Gil'ferding, *Onežskija Byliny*, St. Petersburg, 1873, No. 73, records hearing the minstrel Rjabnin sing *Vol'ga i Mikula* as follows:

4 flats irregular U8

g.fff.gf/g.f.f..r/  
 g.fffedc/d.c.cr  
 cc/eededccd/c..BB..r/  
 (e..e)edfdd/c..BB.r/  
 g.f.f.gf/g.fff.  
 ff/gffgfedc/d.c.cr  
 cd/(e.e.e)ecddcd/(c..B)BBB &c.

Mussgorskiĭ has given a similar transcription, pitched somewhat higher. The Russian melody is more developed than the simplest Spanish ballad tunes, and so a fortiori more than the Spanish epics may have been. They may have had the tonal austerity of Montenegrin heroic songs. But the Russian practice shows how music of the most formless sort may suffice to impose form on irregular words. It is a warning also against looking for formal elements (e.g. four-accent verse) where they need not have existed.

## NOTE C

This legend is complicated in the Balkans by the presence of Akritic poems of a similar content. They refer to the *Kidnapping* of a bride who is identified, on epic authority, as the mother of Digenis Akritas. In these poems, both ballad and epic, wooing and marriage follow the heroic pattern of bride-stealing, as they do in the Serbian 'junačke pesme'. Digenis Akritas steals his own bride from the powerful family of Doukas, despite their contempt for his lineage. He uses Philopappos, the apelate, as a go-between, and is also favoured by possession of a magical 'tamboura'. In some ballads we find Iannakis, also an apelate, is the candidate favoured by the Doukas clan. This story corresponds to the ballad *Liogennêté* (Politis, *Eklogai apo ta tragoudia*, Athens, 1932, 74) or *King Levandis' Girl* (S. Kyriakides, '*O Digenês Akritas*, Athens, n.d., p. 140; p. 149 *Ianni's Marriage*). The details of these stories are often widely different, so that the ballad tends to resemble in parts the other set of kidnappings. One complication has been the transference to Digenis of an episode which may belong properly to Philopappos.

According to the epos Digenis' mother was kidnapped by the emir Mousour when her five brothers were away from home. They hear of the affair and give chase, and a duel occurs in which the youngest brother, Mikrokôstantinos, overcomes Mousour. After some misunderstandings, Mousour agrees to take the lady for his lawful wife, and then brings over his whole tribe to the Christian side. The ballads give a different account of these things. According to *Andronikos' Son*, his mother was 'enceinte' when captured, and it was uncertain whether Digenis was the son of Andronikos or of the emir, who had also his Moslem wife. Alternatively they represent the lady as a Camilla, who yields to the Saracen after a fight, only on condition of his baptism. The kidnapping becomes that of a hero's bride; the hero being, apparently, not Digenis, but Iannakis (S. Kyriakides, *ibid.*, p. 8; Politis 75 does not give the name).

The ballad then runs: Iannakis or Digenis is eating and drinking, when he suddenly realizes that his wife has been kidnapped. (No reason is given.) He goes to converse with his horses, and picks out the oldest and most trusty. He races over the plains, and learns from an old man (sometimes a herd) and from his old mother that the parties are still at table. He meets his mother in his garden, and she fails to recognize him. His wife recognizes him at once, but contrives to pass him off as her brother, and on that pretext offers him a stoup of wine. The hero, Iannakis or Digenis, seizes her, and they ride away. Some of these episodes figure in Asturian Spanish ballads of *Count Dirlos*.

These Greek ballads do not begin with a summons to war on the morning after the wedding, nor do they mention a duration of time. They may lack their proper beginning; but as things are, we seem bound to consider these details to be a western feature. But the two conversations, modelled on those of Odysseus with the swineherd and his father, and the mention of a garden or vineyard, are often found in Balkan ballads, to an

extent which strongly suggests Greek influence, and there are other Greek touches in ballads of a similar type. Thus the Serbian *Marko Kraljević frees his Love* opens with the summons to war and the period of nine years during which the lady is to wait. Then the story changes: she is carried off by three Germans, and Marko chases and recovers her. *Žanković Stojan's Imprisonment* shows Stojan as a prisoner, who is saddened by the thought of his wife's remarriage. He has appointed a nine-year period. Set free, he converses with his old mother in the vineyard, appears at the wedding feast, is recognized by the bride who tells his sister, and the affair is concluded by marrying the sister to the rejected groom. In *Pomorovac Todor* we have the return of a prisoner; his wife is callous, and all ends in blood. The Bulgarian *Simon and his Sister* (Miladinov 65) opens with the summons to war and conversation with the bride. Simon has a magic bouquet which fades on her inconstancy or peril. He returns, converses with his father in the vineyard, and the ballad concludes in the manner of *Žanković Stojan's Imprisonment*.

The Rhodian Greek poem appears to be of the western type. The West European poems present the same characteristics with only minor changes, and *Dobrynja and Aljoša* resembles them. The vacillations in Serbia and Bulgaria would appear, on the face of it, to offer evidence of contamination. We have to remember, however, that the story of Gerhardt von Hohenbach, retailed by Caesarius of Heisterbach about 1200, is connected with the Crusades, which implied contact between the Latins and the Greeks. An Akritic ballad enjoys, 'a priori', a reputation for antiquity, despite the appearance of an italianism like 'kourtesia' in the extant text. It is therefore possible that the western legend may be a reworking of the Akritic legend.

We have also to note that the Akritic legend fits the cycle of *Gaiferos* and *L'Escriveta* at least as well as does the *Waltharius*. *Gaiferos* opens with a scene of revelry; there is a hasty ride over the Pyrenees, and an instant recognition by his bride; they ride away together. We must ignore the Carolingian setting in either case. If derived from the *Waltharius*, we have to admit that these ballads lack one leading characteristic of that epos, namely, the fact that the hero and heroine are both hostages at the court of a heathen king (Attila), when they agree to escape; we note also that the ballads make little of the fight against odds, which is the great scene of the epos. If we were to adopt the Greek alternative, these difficulties would disappear; we should be faced by the apparent location in Aquitaine of the *Gaiferos* story (Walter was 'of Spain' or 'of Aquitaine', and in French Gautier might easily lead to Gaiffier), and with the fact that the Greek source seems more remote than the German, which we know to have been accessible to the Latins since the tenth century. On the other hand, Greek ballads travel as far west as Corsica, whence it is but a short step to Provence, the home of *L'Escriveta*.

Until the Akritic texts are comprehensively known it will not be possible to determine these relationships, or whether they really exist. The western cycles may be independent of the Greek. Details in the Serbian and Bulgarian 'pesme' can hardly be deemed independent.

## NOTE D

The bibliography of this subject is enormous. It is contained in the principal works cited in this note, and there is a special bibliography: De Beaurepaire-Froment, *Bibliographie des Chants Populaires Français*, Paris, n.d. The modern oral lyric is collected into E. Rolland's *Recueil de Chansons Populaires*, 6 vols., Paris, 1883-7 (with music). There are many regional collections. The most important are probably: Comte de Puymaigre, *Chants populaires recueillis dans le pays messin*, 1865, which I know only by excerpts, and J. Bujeaud, *Chants et Chansons populaires des provinces de l'Ouest*, 2 vols., Niort, 1866. D. Arbaud's *Chants populaires de la Provence*, 2 vols., Aix, 1862-4, is somewhat meagre, but of special importance because of the difference of language. M. Haupt's *Französische Volkslieder*, Leipzig, 1877, is eclectic, with a tendency to prefer older songs, and it is in some ways the best general introduction to the subject. The older pieces, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, are those which chiefly concern us here. There are two principal published 'chansonniers', viz. A. Gasté's *Chansons normandes du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, publiées pour la première fois sur les manuscrits de Bayeux et de Vire*, Caen, 1866, and G. Paris et A. Gevaert, *Chansons du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, publiées d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (SATF)*, Paris, new ed. 1935, with a musical appendix. The material offered by these collections is mixed, so that it is a great help to encounter a discriminating selection like that of Th. Gérold, *Chansons populaires des XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Strasbourg, n.d., which has an admirable introduction. One must have at hand also A. Jeanroy's *Origines de la Poésie lyrique en France*, Paris, 1889, 1904, and other editions.

Somewhat apart from these collections stands G. Doncieux's *Romancero populaire de la France*, Paris, 1904. The first word is Spanish, and the notion of a corpus of narratives is somewhat contrary to the French genius, but in the same degree it makes the collection highly valuable for purposes of comparison with Spanish and German balladry. Doncieux has aimed at producing a standard text for each of his ballads, constructed out of the different versions available to him. Similarly, J. Tiersot has noted down standard tunes, ignoring variants and the presence of different tunes for given ballads. For comparative purposes we have to go back to Doncieux and Tiersot's sources, since significant details may not happen to have met with their editorial approval.

## NOTE E

A. Durán's *Romancero general* (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles), 2 vols., Madrid, aimed at completeness and contained 1887 pieces. For many years the scholarly world has awaited the completion of a definitive *Romancero* by Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal, which should contain about four times the material collected by Durán. The tragedy lately enacted in Spain may have dispersed the notes covering a generation of labour. For the present we can only follow Sr Menéndez Pidal's doctrine in the articles and books he has written, which are all of the highest

international interest. The older ballads are to be encountered in F. J. Wolf and C. Hofmann, *Primavera y Flor de Romances*, as edited by M. Menéndez y Pelayo in his *Antología de Poetas líricos castellanos*, viii-x; followed by the same scholar's *Tratado de los viejos Romances* in vols. xi-xiii. References are to the ballads as numbered in the *Primavera*, or to the volume and page of the *Antología*.

## NOTE F

Flecker's excellent translation will serve to show those who care to make the comparison some of the difficulties of rendering Spanish ballads into English. He cuts off a syllable or two from each line; justifiably, because there are more syllables in Spanish to the same number of words. As my object is to reproduce the form of the original, I have given the lines their Spanish length, at the cost of a little padding. Flecker has not been able to avoid some padding. Then there is the difficult matter of the assonance. Several keywords suggest the assonance in *ee* which is used by Flecker as well as Longfellow: 'sea, he, she, cramasy, tree', &c. But Flecker was unable to carry this assonance through the poem, and, on the other hand, his rhymes are too perfect, being full rhymes. I have endeavoured to use a more sonorous assonance in *o*, and, in order to mark its quality as assonance and not rhyme, I have gone out of my way to break strings of rhymes when these offered themselves. The Spanish poet was under no such necessity. Assonance was, and is, a device so familiar that no inconvenience is suffered if a series of full rhymes appears among them. But in English such a series suggests rhyme, and the occasional assonances produce a wrong effect of imperfection. Assonance in two syllables, as in many ballads, is more than I dare attempt.

## NOTE G

*Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (DGF), by S. Grundtvig and A. Olrik (Copenhagen, 1853-1920), is not easy to obtain in England, and not often complete. I have on my shelves Abrahamson, Nyerup, and Rahbeck's *Udvalgte Danske Viser* (UDV) (Copenhagen, 1812-14), which is sufficient for the sort of general comparisons instituted in this book. S. Grundtvig's *Danmarks Folkeviser i Udvalg* (DFU) (Copenhagen, 1882), and A. Olrik's *Danske Folkeviser i Udvalg* (Olrik) (Copenhagen, 1927), are excellent anthologies, the latter having a valuable preface. R. C. A. Prior's *Ancient Danish Ballads*, London, 1860, corresponds to the first three volumes of DGF. E. T. Kristensen's *Jyske Folkeviser og Toner*, 100 *gamle jyske Folkeviser*, and *Gamle Viser i Folkemunde* (Copenhagen, 1871, 1889, 1891), give the living oral tradition.

For Sweden there are two sources: A. I. Arwidsson's *Svenska Forn-sånger* (Stockholm, 1834-42), and E. G. Geijer and A. A. Afzelius' *Svenska Folk-visor*, as revised by Bergström (Stockholm, 1880), with a volume of tunes by L. Höijer. For Norway I have consulted M. B. Landstad's *Norske Folkeviser* (Christiania, 1853), without having access to S. Bugge's *Gamle norske Folkeviser* (Christiania, 1858). The Icelandic

ballads are in S. Grundtvig's *Íslensk Fornkvæði* (Copenhagen, 1854-8), to which was added a second volume in 1859-85. The Faeroese ballads were gathered by Grundtvig into his manuscript *Corpus carminum faeroensium* (CCF), from which various extracts have been made. I have used V. U. Hammershaimb's *Færøsk Anthologi* (Copenhagen, 1886-91).

## NOTE H

There is a handy one-volume edition of the *English and Scottish Ballads*, edited by H. C. Sargent and G. L. Kittredge, Cambridge, Mass., 1904. A. Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of Ballads*, Oxford, 1910, used some not in Child, but in general goes to show that Child's selection is tentative. The texts are for readers: eclectic. The leading student of the broadside ballad has been Hyder E. Rollins, who has many valuable editions to his credit. One, of an anthological nature, is *Old English Ballads (1553-1625)*, Cambridge, 1920. Sir C. Firth's essay on 'Ballads and Broad-sides' (*Essays*, Oxford, 1938; reprinted from *Shakespeare's England*, 1916) shows how full Shakespeare's mind was of these catches. R. L. Greene's *Early English Carols*, Oxford, 1935, is a study of an allied literary form. A useful general account of ballad-poetry from the English and American standpoints is G. H. Gerould's *Ballad of Tradition*, Oxford, 1932. Professor Gerould deals summarily—but sufficiently from the standpoint of this book, with the new ballads of the negroes, cowboys, and lumberjacks of America. Child's appeal for American material proved fruitless. Olive Dame Campbell and C. J. Sharp's *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, New York, 1917, contained eighteen quite new ballads, and was of the utmost importance from the musical standpoint. The collection of ballads in Virginia, the Carolinas, Maryland, and even in Maine and other states has been most vigorous. A reader who dips into Dorothy Scarborough's *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains*, New York, 1937, will encounter not only ballads, but also an agreeable description of the sort of people who still sing them and believe in them. A copious bibliography accompanies Professor Gerould's book.

## NOTE I

L. Erk and F. Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort*, Leipzig, 1893-5; J. Meier, *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Melodien: Balladen* (3 fascicules have appeared), Berlin and Leipzig, 1935-7. Except for the study of the history of literature these publications render unnecessary the study of Herder, Arnim and Brentano, Uhland, &c. They also include the Dutch and Flemish evidence, which can be consulted best in Hoffmann von Fallersleben, *Niederländische Volkslieder*, Hannover, 1856 (*Horæ Belgicæ*, ii). R. von Liliencron's *Historische Volkslieder der Deutschen*, Leipzig, 1865-9, contains a great many historical poems for which there is little or no evidence of traditional transmission; those relevant to our study have been gathered into Erk-Böhme. F. Arnold's *Das deutsche Volkslied*, Prenzlau, 1927, is a really useful anthology and introduction; so is also J. Sahr's *Das deutsche Volkslied*, ed. P. Sartori, Berlin and Leipzig, 1924, in

the Göschen series. A general introduction to the ballad and its influence on German literature may be obtained from W. Kayser, *Geschichte der deutschen Ballade*, Berlin, 1936.

## NOTE J

I have not been able to get satisfactory documents for narrative poetry in Hungary, as our English libraries are not well stocked with Magyar literary texts. Szilasi Béla's *Hungarian Folk-Songs*, Budapest, is entirely lyrical. Out of 44 pieces given by H. Möller in *Das Lied der Völker*, Mainz, only three are narratives which serve for comparison with those of other countries; the rest are mostly lyrics. There are 37 folk-songs in W. Tolnai, *Ungarisches Lesebuch* (Sammlung Göschen), Berlin-Leipzig, 1913, which are mostly lyrical. Authorities on international ballads have not suggested that any important theme has originated among the Magyars, and so I have ceased further inquiry, relying on the description given by J. H. Schwicker, *Geschichte der ungarischen Litteratur*, Leipzig, 1899, pp. 568-89: 'Die Volkspoesie und ihr Einfluss'. My purpose is not so much to describe Magyar ballads as to assign them their place in international traditional song; and that is undisputed. [I have later, by the kindness of Mr. George Buday, been able to consult the admirable *Székelv Népballadák*, Budapest, 1935, which Dr. G. Ortutay has edited, and Mr. Buday has illustrated with striking woodcuts.]

## NOTE K

Bohdan Zaleski (Wacław z Oleska), *Pieśni Polskie i Ruskie Ludu Galicyjskiego*, Lwów, 1833, divides his collection into 'women's songs' (476 pp.), and 'men's songs' (38 pp.). The latter are the true narratives. The division, however, which was taken over from Karadžić, does not seem relevant to Polish folk-song. To the fuller anthologies of later editors I have, unfortunately, not been able to resort. R. Walter's *Dudelsack, Schalmel und Geige: Polnische Volkslieder*, Hamburg (no date), with an epilogue by Dr. Lucjan Kamieński, helps to correct the impressions one gets from Zaleski, but these may still be false in some important particulars. There are 26 Polish songs included in H. Möller, *Das Lied der Völker*. Specifically Galician songs recur in V. Antonovič and M. Dragomanov, *Istoričeskija Pěsni Malorusskago Naroda*, Kiev, 1874.

## NOTE L

A lay song is called a 'daina', plural 'dainos' in Lithuanian, but 'dainas' in Latvian. The word may be connected with the Rumanian 'doină'. It means no more than 'song', but it must be distinguished from 'giesmė' 'a religious song'. No account is taken of religious songs in this essay. The most useful collection of Lithuanian 'dainos' is G. H. F. Nesselmann *Litthauische Volkslieder*, Berlin, 1853, but I have also consulted A. Juškėvič, *Liėtuviskos Dainos*, Kazan, 1880-2, Rhesa, *Dainos* (ed. Fr. Kurschat), Berlin, 1843, A. Leskien, *Litauisches Lesebuch*, Heidelberg, 1919 (17 'dainos'), &c. U. Katzenelenbogen's *The Daina*, Chicago, 1935,

has an excellent introduction, and really sensitive translations into English of 98 Lithuanian and 283 Latvian pieces. I have not had access to Kr. Barons and H. Wissendorff's great *Latwju dainas*, Mitau and St. Petersburg, 1894-1915, but think that the indications given by U. Katzenelenbogen and the 176 examples in J. Endzelin's *Lettisches Lesebuch*, Heidelberg, 1922, suffice to place the discussion of Latvian folksong on a sound basis. On a point of particular interest—the survival of pagan deities and customs in this region—Mr. Janis Karklins was good enough to send me the valuable *Chansons mythologiques lettones* (Paris, 1929) by M. Jonval. It contains an introduction dealing with this mythology, and 1219 poems in Latvian and French.

## NOTE M

An apology has been tendered in the preface for accepting second-hand evidence of Finnish and Esthonian balladry. None the less, the references in this chapter are to poems which have been studied in the original. An interval of three months occurred between the preface and the final draft of this chapter, and in consequence I have been able to do some, though inadequate, original reading. Candour thus requires that the initial apology still stand, with this modification.

The Finnish ballads have been collected in E. Lönnrot, *Kanteletar*, Helsinki, 1864 (2nd ed.), especially in his third section, 'Virsi-Lauluja', and in the introduction. For the *Kalevala* I have used W. Kirby's translation reprinted in 'Everyman's Library' and the Finnish edition by Rothsten and Forsman issued at Helsinki in 1887. C. J. Billson's *Popular Poetry of the Finns*, London, 1900, is a pleasant introduction, but lamentably short.

The most useful collection of Esthonian songs is J. Hurt's *Vana Kannel*, Dorpat, 1886. The first volume has a complete German translation, and my observations have been restricted to these translated pieces. For the *Kalevipoeg* there is W. Kirby's summary in *The Hero of Esthonia*, London, 1895, vol. i; and the Esthonian text is available to me in an edition issued at Kuopio in 1862.

## NOTE N

Initially all vowels are supposed to alliterate with each other. The alliterations may overlap from one line to another, though in the second a new alliteration rules. Some notion of the subtleties of this style may be obtained from noticing the alliterations and echoes in

<i>Hierelevi, hautelevi,</i>	Then she rubbed and then she softened,
<i>muna muuttui neitoseksi,</i>	till the egg became a maiden,
<i>mikä neille nimeksi—</i>	and the maiden's name—what was it?—
<i>Sorsatarko, Suometarko?</i>	Wild Duck's daughter? Finland's daughter?
<i>Ei ole Sorsatar soria,</i>	Nay, she was not Wild Duck's daughter,
<i>Suometar nimi soria.</i>	but was Finland's pretty daughter.

*Kanteletar*, 'Virsi-Lauluja', 1, lines 10-15.

Longfellow's *Hiawatha* metre reproduces only the more monotonous aspects of Finnish prosody, though it is the nearest English equivalent.



It is impossible in English, with its more varied sound system, to reproduce the Finnish echoes in all their subtlety.

## NOTE O

Adonz, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xxix, 1930, discusses the relation between Digenis and the Armenian David of Sasoun; Speranskiĭ discussed the Russian romance of *Devgeniĭ* in the Russian Academy's Memoirs (Section of Language and Literature) for 1922. H. Grégoire posits an Arabic *Geste de Mélitène*, relating to the exploits and death of the emir and martyr 'Umar al-Nu'mân in 863. From this supposed *Geste* would descend, on the one hand, the Moslem episodes of the Greek poem (*Geste de l'Émir*), and on the other the *Histoire du roi Omar-al-Némân et ses deux fils merveilleux Scharkân et Daou'l-Makân* (Mardrus's translation of the *Arabian Nights*). The episode should be assigned, according to Grégoire, to the early Baghdad cycle, not to the late Egyptian cycle of stories (to which it had been attributed by other scholars). Then there is the 'great Arabic romance of chivalry', the *Dât al-Himma wa'l-Battâl*, for which we are referred to an article by Cagnard in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1926, and lastly the Turkish heroic tale of *Sayyid Battâl*. What is hypothetical in this account of the matter is the so-called *Geste de Mélitène*. Supposing there were no such work, and that the Moslem episodes of the Greek poem were merely novelesque developments from certain facts of history, then it seems far from impossible to regard the legend in the *Arabian Nights*—uncertain of date, as it is—as a derivative from a Greek source, in so far as the two coincide; and so on for the other romances. The references are those given by H. Grégoire.

## NOTE P

The Serbian ballads were collected by V. S. Karadžić, *Srpske narodne Pjesme* (my edition is that of Belgrade, 1895), and by an anonymous German in the Erlangen manuscript edited by G. Gezerman, *Erlangenski Rukopis*, Carlowitz, 1925, for which I have to thank Professor Vladeta Popović, of Belgrade. Miloš Đurić's *Srpske narodne Pesme*, Belgrade (no date) is a convenient popular issue. There are other collections, particularly of women's songs, into which I have not thought it necessary to inquire. That aspect of Serbian folk-song is sufficiently treated by L. K. Goetz in *Volklied und Volksleben der Kroaten und Serben*, Heidelberg, 1936-7, 2 vols. A full-length treatment of the men's songs is given by H. M. and N. K. Chadwick in *The Growth of Literature*, Cambridge, 1936, ii. 2: 'Yugoslav Oral Poetry' (pp. 299-456), and in D. Subotić's *Yugoslav popular Ballads*, Cambridge, 1932. P. Popović summarized research down to 1932 in *Misao*, xl, and D. Kostić issued notes on the second volume of Karadžić under the title *Tumačenje druge knjige Srpskih narodnih Pjesama Vuka St. Karadžića*, Belgrade, 1937. A. Dozon collected a number of pieces for his *Poésies serbes*.

The standard Bulgarian collection is by D. and K. Miladinov, *Bălgarski narodni Pjesni*, 2nd ed., Sofia, 1891. A. Dozon's *Chansons populaires*

*bulgares inédites*, Paris, 1875, has been of great help since it contains both translations and an impeccable glossary. A. Dozon's *Contes albanais*, Paris, 1881, contains a few lines of Albanian verse, which show coincidences of form and theme with the Serbian.

## NOTE Q

N. Iorga, *Istoria Literaturii românești*, i, Bucharest, 1925, chap. i: 'Balada populară românească—originarea și ciclurile ei.' The standard of reference is V. Alecsandri, *Poezii populare*, recently re-edited by G. Gluglea (Bucharest, 1938), with improved annotations. It is incomplete as a picture of Rumanian balladry, and I have drawn also on G. D. Teodorescu, *Poesii populare române*, Bucharest, 1885; G. G. Tocilescu, *Materialuri folkloristice*, i: *Poesia poporandă*, Bucharest, 1900; O. Densusianu, *Flori alese din Cîntecele poporului*, Bucharest, 1920; I. A. Candrea and O. Densusianu, *Din Popor*, Bucharest, 1908; and L. Salvini, *Canti popolari romeni*, Lanciano, 1931; as well as the anthologies of Rumanian texts published by M. Gaster, C. Tagliavini, and S. Pușcariu and I. Breazu. For several of these books I am indebted to Sir William Craigie.

## NOTE R

P. N. Rybnikov, *Pěsmi*, 3 vols., Moscow, 1909-10 (revised edition); A. Gil'ferding, *Onežskija Byliny*, St. Petersburg, 1873; M. Speranskiĭ, *Byliny*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1916; N. K. Chadwick, *Russian heroic Poetry*, Cambridge, 1932. I have not seen Skaftymov, *Poetika i Genezis Bylin*, Saratov, 1924, but have found Speranskiĭ's notes helpful and also the careful summary of research in Keltujala, *Kurs Istorii Russkoĭ Literatury*, i, St. Petersburg, 1913. A masterly statement in English is contained in H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, ii. 1: 'Russian Oral Literature', Cambridge, 1936; and R. Trautmann, *Die Volksdichtung der Grossrussen*, i: *Das Heldenlied (Die Byline)*, Heidelberg, 1935, is authoritative. F. W. Neumann, *Geschichte der russischen Ballade*, Königsberg, 1937, deals with the consequences of this folk-literature for the artistic writers of the nineteenth century. It is only in the latter half of his period that the 'byliny' begin to operate directly on the artistic conscience. In the earlier years the standard of ballad-making is set by Percy and Herder's followers.

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